



SUPERSTAR GRAHAM:

"I'M TOO GOOD
TO BE TRUE!"

Inside

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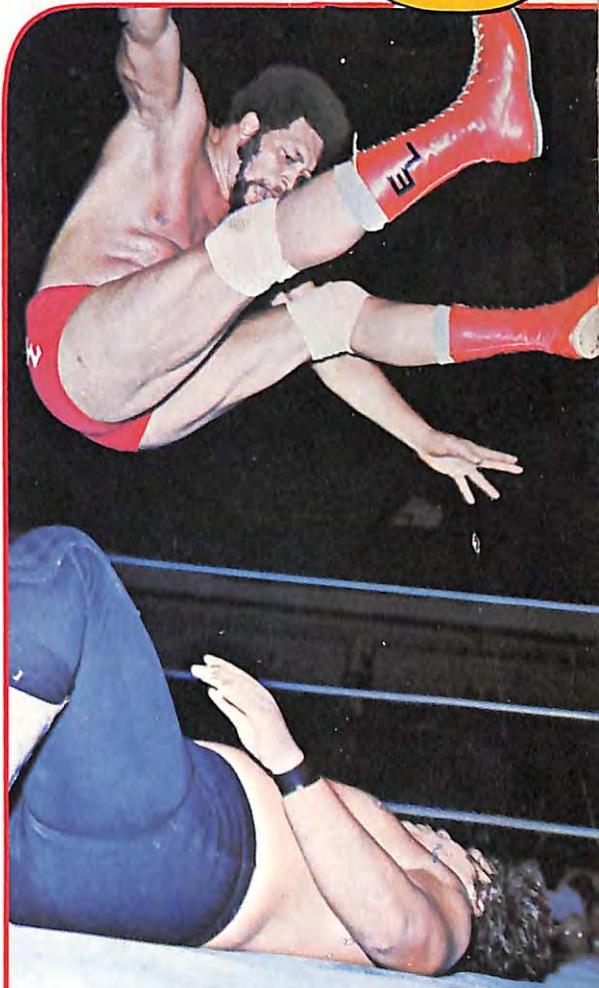
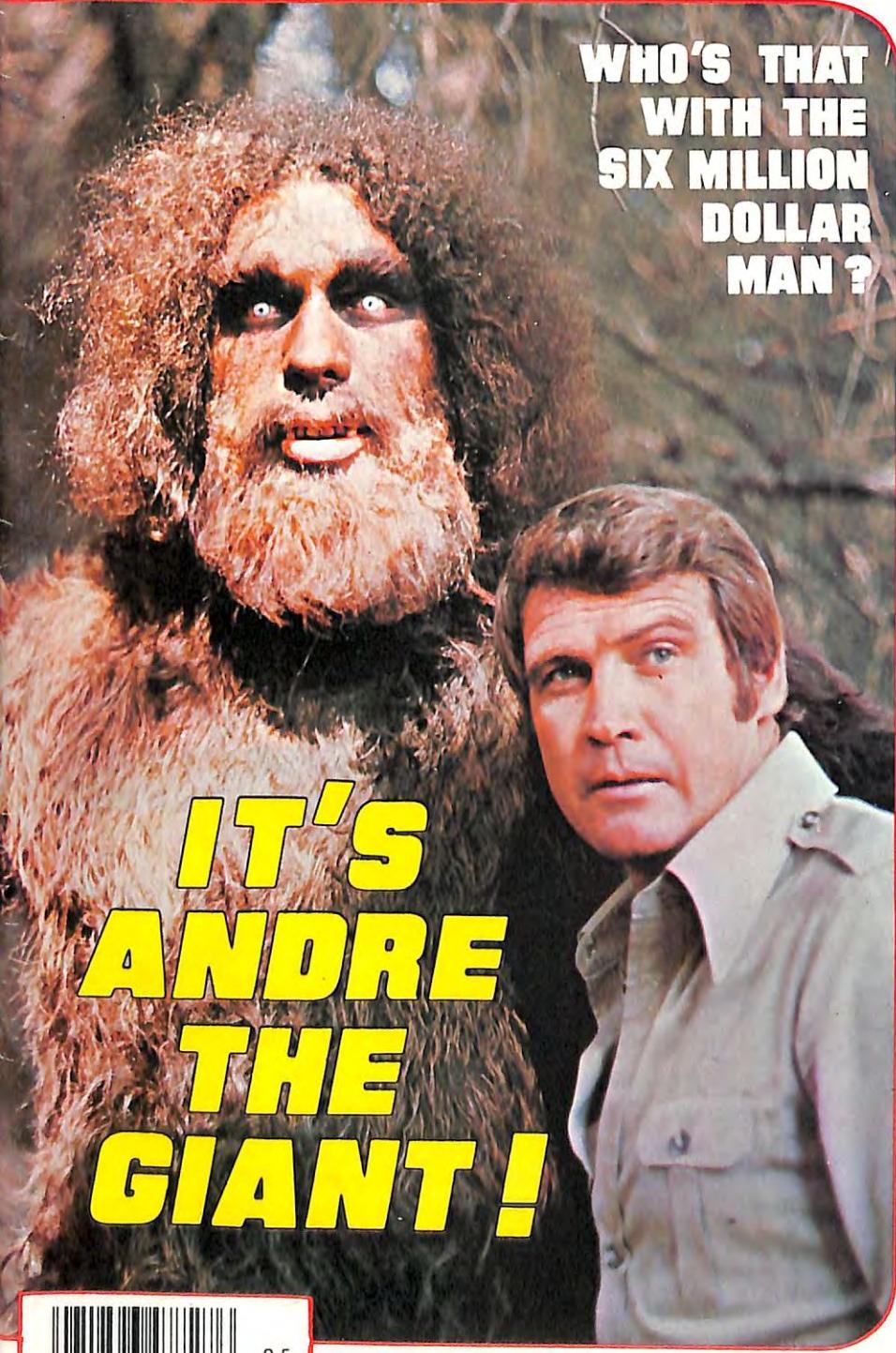
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Wrestling

INSIDE
WRESTLING

WHO'S THAT
WITH THE
SIX MILLION
DOLLAR
MAN?

IT'S
ANDRE
THE
GIANT!



ERNIE LADD
THE COMPLETE
LIFE STORY OF
WRESTLING'S
MOST
CONTROVERSIAL
ATHLETE

Incredible but True UNKNOWN WINS
THE LOS ANGELES BATTLE ROYAL



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Inside Wrestling

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- 2—SUPERSTAR BILLY GRAHAM
- 3—IVAN KOLOFF
- 4—IVAN PUTSKI
- 5—BOBO BRAZIL
- 6—SCANDOR AKBAR
- 7—LOUIS CYR
- 8—BUGSY MCGRAW
- 9—BILLY WHITE WOLF
- 10—DOMINIC DENUCCI

AMERICAN WRESTLING ASSOCIATION

CHAMPION: NICK BOCKWINKLE

- 1—VERNE GAGNE
- 2—LARRY HENNIG
- 3—BILLY ROBINSON
- 4—JOE LEDUC
- 5—OX BAKER
- 6—PAMPERO FIRPO
- 7—BARON VON RASCHKE
- 8—BOBBY DUNCUM
- 9—GREG GAGNE
- 10—JIM BRUNZELL

MOST POPULAR

- 1—IVAN PUTSKI
- 2—BRUNO SAMMARTINO
- 3—DUSTY RHODES
- 4—MIL MASCARAS
- 5—ANDRE THE GIANT
- 6—MARK LEWIN
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- 10—PAUL JONES



ERNIE LADD



OX BAKER

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- 1—JACK BRISCO
- 2—SHOHEI BABA
- 3—PAUL JONES
- 4—DORY FUNK JR.
- 5—THE SHEIK
- 6—HARLEY RACE
- 7—DUSTY RHODES
- 8—MR. WRESTLING II
- 9—JERRY LAWLER
- 10—CHAVO GUERRERO

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- 1—THE ANDERSON BROTHERS
- 2—TONY PARISI & LOUIS CERDAN
- 3—BRUISER & CRUSHER
- 4—BILLY GRAHAM & IVAN KOLOFF
- 5—THE VALIANT BROTHERS
- 6—THE MONGOLS
- 7—GOLIATH & BLACK GORDMAN
- 8—PAT PATTERSON & PEDRO MORALES
- 9—BRUTE BERNARD & NICOALI VOLKOFF
- 10—JACK & JERRY BRISCO

WOMEN

CHAMPION: FABULOUS MOOLAH

- 1—SUSAN GREEN
- 2—VICKI WILLIAMS
- 3—JOYCE GRABLE
- 4—DONNA CHRISTENELLO
- 5—SUSAN SEXTON
- 6—KITTY ADAMS
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DORY FUNK JR.

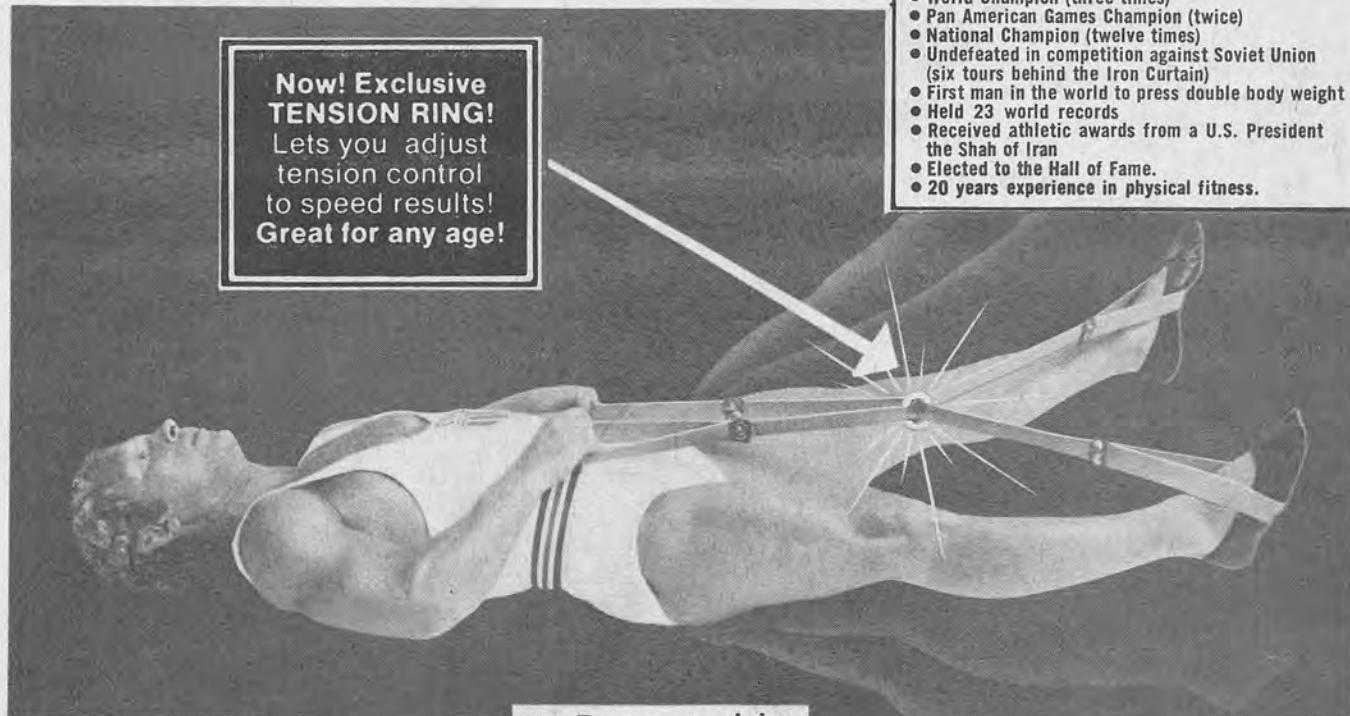


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HY HARRIS, New York, N.Y.

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The Science of SYNOMETRICS

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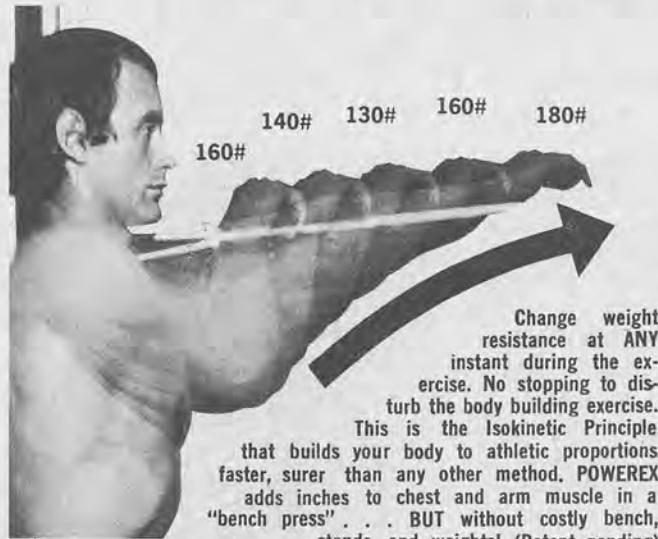
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● "I'm beginning to look like I did when I got out of the Marine Corps." —Don C., PA.

● "In just 6 weeks, I put 2" on my arms, 3" on my chest, 2" on my thighs, and gained 22 lbs." —N.D.

● "In complete honesty, I think it is a great exercise program . . . the best one on the market!!!!" —Dave Fuss, IL.

● "You just aren't another rip-off company. You back what you say." —T Roecklein, WI.

● "I've averaged from 2-3" on my legs, arms, and chest — I'm glad that I did invest the money." —Richard Oxer, MT.

● "Enclosed is my money order (for a new Powerex). I know how good it is. I had one and I lost it. I am in several sports and cannot win without Powerex. It is the greatest!" —G Scott, Canada.

● "Arms increased 2½", chest 3", decreased waist 2", and gained 20 lbs. — look and feel a lot better!" —Joseph Moreno, CA.

● "I used to be a singles man — this season I was a home run hitter, and I credit Powerex with this." —T J, AL.

● "The results are just FANTASTIC!" —Richard Lynn, MN.

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NEWS FROM THE WRESTLING CAPITALS

FLORIDA REPORTS

By T.G. Nathan

A FEUD GETTING hotter and hotter every day is the one between Mike Graham and Bob Orton Jr. Orton, a recent arrival on the Florida scene, was once a good, scientific wrestler. He had a similar style to that of Graham. But in recent months Orton changed his



Bob Orton Jr. has his hands full with Tony Romano (above) but he really wants to get his hands on Mike Graham, with whom he is having a bloody feud.

If you would like your area of the country represented in these reports, while also being officially credited with your own by-line, send us reports of the matches you attend. You will have the thrill of seeing your name in an internationally known magazine while at the same time helping to improve the quality of wrestling in your area. So why not give it a try? You will be glad you did!

Send your reports to: Correspondent Editor, Box 58, Rockville Centre, N.Y. 11571.

style to that of a rulebreaker. And Mike vowed if he ever met Orton he'd show Bob the scientific style always prevails over dirty tactics.

A match was signed for West Palm Beach. When ring announcer Bill Stackhouse announced Graham, the fans cheered wildly. Orton's name was met with boos.

Anxious to square off against each other, both waited for time-keeper L.B. Mitchell to ring the bell. And when it sounded both shot out of their corner with the same object in mind—flying dropkicks. They crashed against each other. Both fell to the mat. Graham got to his feet first and as Orton got onto his feet, Mike took him down with a flying headscissors.

After 10 minutes of action, mostly in Graham's favor, young Mike was able to come out victorious. Orton learned a lesson, but we doubt if he'll change!

Billy Robinson stopped Killer Kowalski in another exciting event. . . Abe Jacobs downed Beauregard . . . Karl Von Steiger pounced Bill Dromo . . . Missouri Mauler and Mike York combined to upset Tom Jones and Roosevelt Jones.

CAROLINA CORRESPONDENCE

By Russ Carter

This part of the country is watching intently what could become the surprise feud between the teams of Ric Flair and his partner, Blackjack Mulligan, and the Anderson Brothers.

During a recent Mid-Atlantic wrestling show, Flair told the brothers he and Mulligan planned to go right to the very top this year as a team. He strongly implied he and Blackjack intended to wrest the NWA title from the Andersons. Nothing has been heard from the Anderson Brothers yet, but if it does come off, it would be a very exciting



Above: Mike Graham is always happy to pose for photographers and fans. He is very serious, though, about his feud with Bob Orton Jr. Below: With his partner, Ric Flair, Blackjack Mulligan is feuding with the tag team champion Andersons.



battle indeed.

In a wild match in Raleigh, Wahoo McDaniel took on Angelo Mosca. Moments after the match began, both wrestlers were out of the ring and on the floor, slugging each other with powerful punches. The referee demanded the action return

(Continued on page 50)

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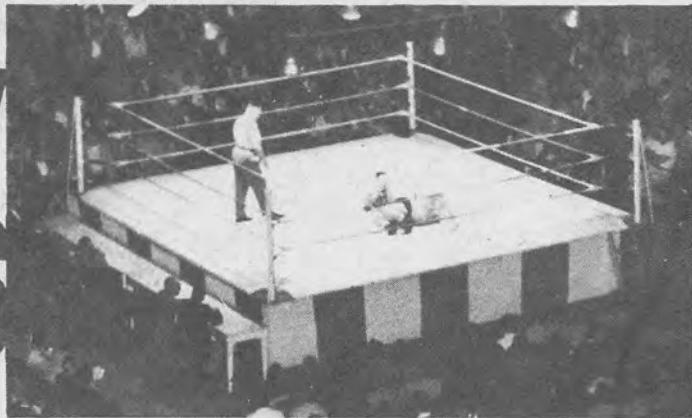
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GETS WHAT HE DESERVED

When I heard of Buddy Colt's airplane accident, I tried to feel sorry for the guy. No one deserves that kind of trouble, I figured. But having watched the bum wrestle for years, I really couldn't work up much sympathy.

After reading, "Take Your Sympathy And Shove It!" (INSIDE WRESTLING/March 1976), I couldn't have felt better about my feelings about Colt. That rat deserves whatever he gets. Imagine insulting people nice enough to feel sorry for him!

Well, I hope he recovers so some real wrestler can finish his career for good. Then Colt can take his insults and shove it!

DARRYL MUDGEON
Atlanta, Ga.

HAPPY RINGSIDER

For those of us who can't make it to New York's Madison Square Garden—and that's most of your readers—the feature, "Your Ringside For A Night At the Garden" (INSIDE WRESTLING/March 1976), was a real treat.

After seeing photos of the action for one night, I can't wait until I too can travel to New York and see it in person. Until then, I'll enjoy your great magazine.

WILLIAM FASBUNISIN
Waterville, Me.

FINE SUGGESTION

As a concerned wrestling fan, I would hope you can convey my suggestion to those in charge of syndicating wrestling shows.

It appears to me more interest could be generated in wrestling (as well as treating the fans to some great action) if the wrestling shows presented some old films of former stars Buddy Rogers, Jimmy Londos, and Antonio Rocca.



Fans praise the special NBC-TV "Tomorrow Show" (above) for spotlighting wrestling. Buddy Colt gives no sympathy (below) and wants none of it either.



Old-time wrestling buffs would be treated to seeing their favorites in action and newer mat fans would learn wrestling history. Everyone would enjoy wrestling as the great sport it's always been.

LEON LYNN
Lawrence, N.Y.

TOMORROW TRIUMPH

The next best thing to actually seeing the *Tomorrow* television show devoted to professional wrestling was to read about it in your excellent magazine (INSIDE WRESTLING/March 1976).

I agree with you the highlight of the program was Bill Apter's fascinating recollections and insights into the sport. However, as you so ably pointed out, the entire show was an unqualified success.

I'll never forget the interesting conversations with Bruno Sammartino, Billy Graham, Gorilla Monsoon, (Continued on page 48)

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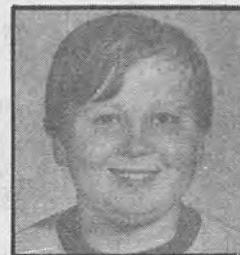
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DANIEL SIGMUND (10)
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Omaha, Nebraska 68107
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Bockwinkle his favorite.
Likes bad guys. Boys
for pen pals.



VIVIAN ACEVEDO (14)
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Snyder her favorite.
Likes good and bad
guys. Boys for PP's.



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Likes sports, Andre the
Giant his favorite. Likes
good guys. Girls for
pen pals.



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New Castle, IN 47362
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Igor his favorite.
Likes good guys.
Boys for pen pals.



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Central Islip, NY 11722
Likes bowling. Ivan
Putski his favorite.
Likes good guys. Girls
for pen pals.



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Chief Strongbow his
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MARIE NEWBURY (8)
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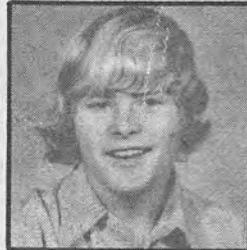


JERRY NORTON (18)
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Jones his favorite.
Likes good guys.
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PALS



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TIM MOUNTFORT (17)
5752 Hurdia Road
Jacksonville, FL 32210
Likes sports. Johnny Valentine his favorite.
Likes good and bad guys.
Girls for pen pals.



GLEN CACCAMO (9)
1359 E. 17 Street
Brooklyn, NY 11230
Likes judo. Bruno Sammartino his favorite.
Likes good guys. Anyone for pen pals.



WINNIE CARSON (38)
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Jacksonville Beach, FL 32250
Likes bowling. Mil Mascaras her favorite.
Likes good guys. Anyone for pen pals.



SCOTT CUDD (12)
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Galesburg, IL 61401
Enjoys minicycles.
Bruiser his favorite.
Likes good guys.
Girls for PP's.



MICHELE KAKUK (9)
160 Seventh Avenue
Brooklyn, NY 11215
Likes volleyball.
Bruno Sammartino her favorite.
Likes good guys. Anyone for PP's.



MARIAN INGLETT (13)
2840 Houston Avenue
Macon, Georgia 31206
Likes horseback riding.
The Garvins her favorites.
Likes good and bad guys.
Anyone for pen pals.



JOHN CIAMPOLI (13)
620 Newark Avenue
Jersey City, NJ 07306
Likes football. Pedro Morales his favorite.
Likes good and bad guys. Girls for PP's.



FRANK MACKIEWICZ (12)
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Shelton, CT 06484
Enjoys skating.
Pedro Morales his favorite.
Likes good guys. Anyone for PP's.



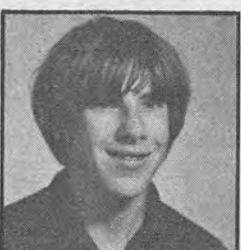
JUDY WOODS (15)
Hoagland Hill Road
Mt. Washington, KY 40047
Likes horseback riding.
Jackie Fargo her favorite.
Likes good and bad guys.
Anyone for pen pals.



JIM PRESUTTI (12)
124 Bayberry Lane
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Likes good guys.
Girls for pen pals.



JANETTE BRANAM (18)
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Shelbyville, IL 62565
Enjoys painting. Dick the Bruiser her favorite.
Likes good and bad guys. Boys for pen pals.



RALPH SWANSON (15)
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Richmond, VA 23231
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Likes good and bad guys. Anyone for PP's.



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Ont., Canada POK 1PO
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Likes good guys. Boys for pen pals.



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VERNE GAGNE'S TROUBLED FUTURE

Verne Gagne is determined to reclaim the AWA title. But the stranglehold Nick Bockwinkle has on the belt may be too hard a nut for even the great Gagne to crack

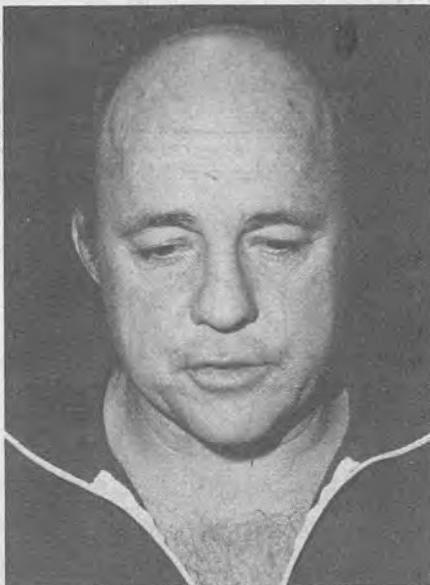
THE MATCH WAS over. There was nothing to do—nothing to be done. Verne Gagne had once again failed to regain his AWA title from Nick Bockwinkle, the man who took it from him.

Verne took the long walk back to the dressing room without feeling the weight of a title belt around his waist. The friendly cheers of the crowd sound sadly different from the cheers accorded a champion. The sound of failure filled Verne's ears as he trudged back.

The ex-champion quickly showered and dressed. He wanted to flee the scene of his disaster as soon as possible. However, being a gentleman and a sportsman, he forced himself to stay for the questions from reporters. For dignity, Gagne has no equal.

"Did Bockwinkle do anything to surprise you this time?" was the first question asked.

"No, not really," was the considered answer, "though his manager's interference came when I was unprepared for it. Bobby Heenan is the most dangerously cunning manager around. If there were 15 referees, Heenan



Verne Gagne is deep in thought before a return clash against AWA king Nick Bockwinkle. Verne refuses to let Nick rule the kingdom of the AWA much longer.

would find a way to interfere undetected. But I should have been prepared for it. You have to be ready for Heenan every second of a match. I wasn't. I will be."

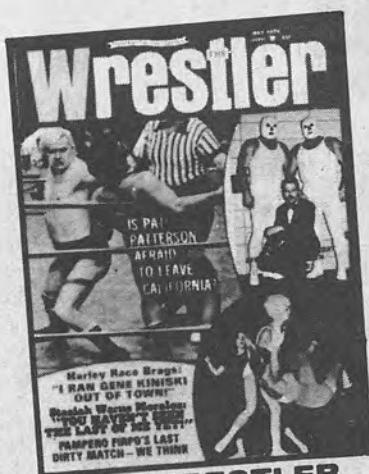
The next question was the one everyone knew had to be asked, yet no one wanted to say. There is no reason to name the man who finally had the callousness to speak it.

"When you lost the title," he said as softly as possible, "you mentioned you had always planned to retire when you lost the belt. However, losing it to Bockwinkle under controversial circumstances changed that. You felt compelled to wrestle. Now you have been unable to defeat Bockwinkle in several matches. Are you considering retiring without getting back the belt?"

Verne winced. The question served to underline the suspicion Gagne could never regain his title. It was a question the ex-champion had hoped wouldn't be asked. Now it was out in the open; he had to respond.

"I still think I can be AWA champ again," Verne said slowly. "I don't plan to retire until I am. It has been hard for
(Continued on page 46)

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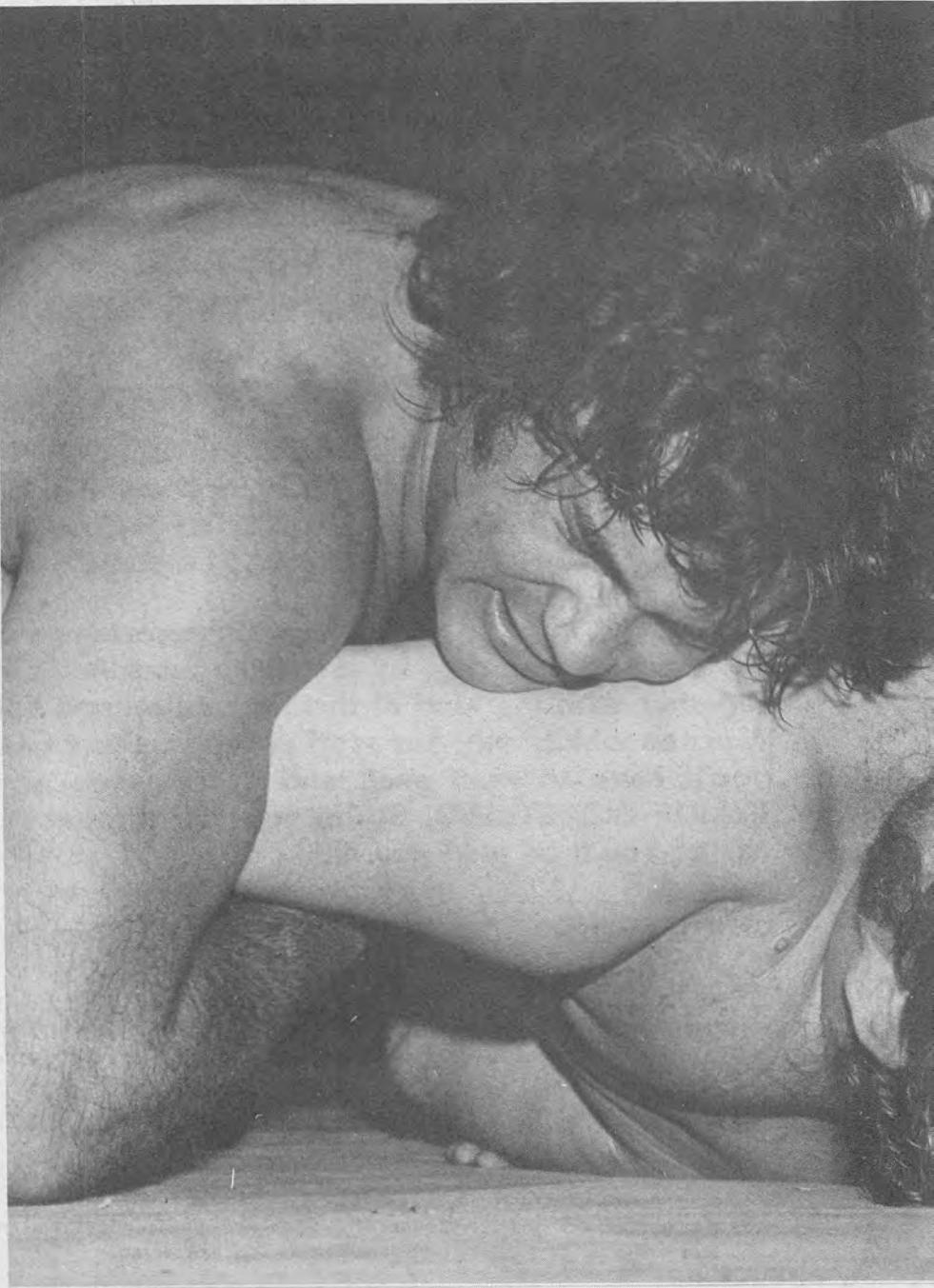
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CHAVO WHIPS DORY JR. - THE UPSET THAT ROCKED WRESTLING

PHOTOS BY THEO EHRET

When the dust cleared, rookie sensation Chavo Guerrero was more shocked than anyone else: He had just upset former NWA champion Dory Funk Jr., a feat not many wrestlers can say they have done

Chavo gets a "two" count when he cradles Dory the first time (right). Proudly holding the Americas title, Chavo (far right) battles Dory (below) in a match that was glory for him.



“WHOM IS THIS rookie they say beat my brother?” screamed Dory Funk Jr. “It is impossible for an unknown to have beaten Terry.

“All I know is this Chavo Guerrero could never beat me. I don’t think he really beat Terry. He probably won because of a fluke. Or maybe it was because he and Terry wrestled in Los Angeles, and that is Chavo’s home town, where he obviously had an advantage.”

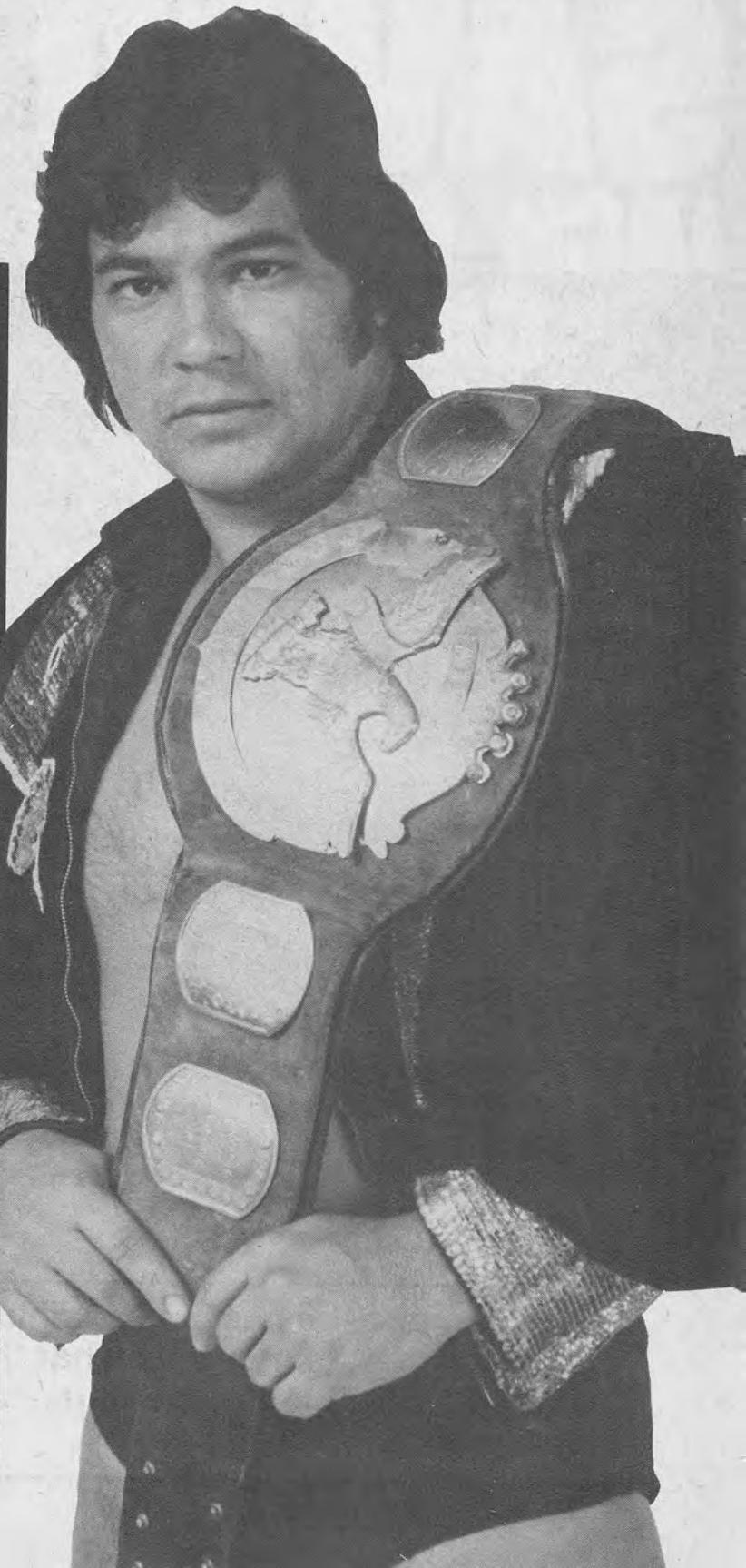
Chavo Guerrero is not the unknown Dory would like to think he is. The powerful young grappler has been a sensation in west coast wrestling circles for several months. His popularity is on the

constant increase. More and more fans are flocking to wrestling arenas just to see the Mexican rookie who recently won the Americas heavyweight championship.

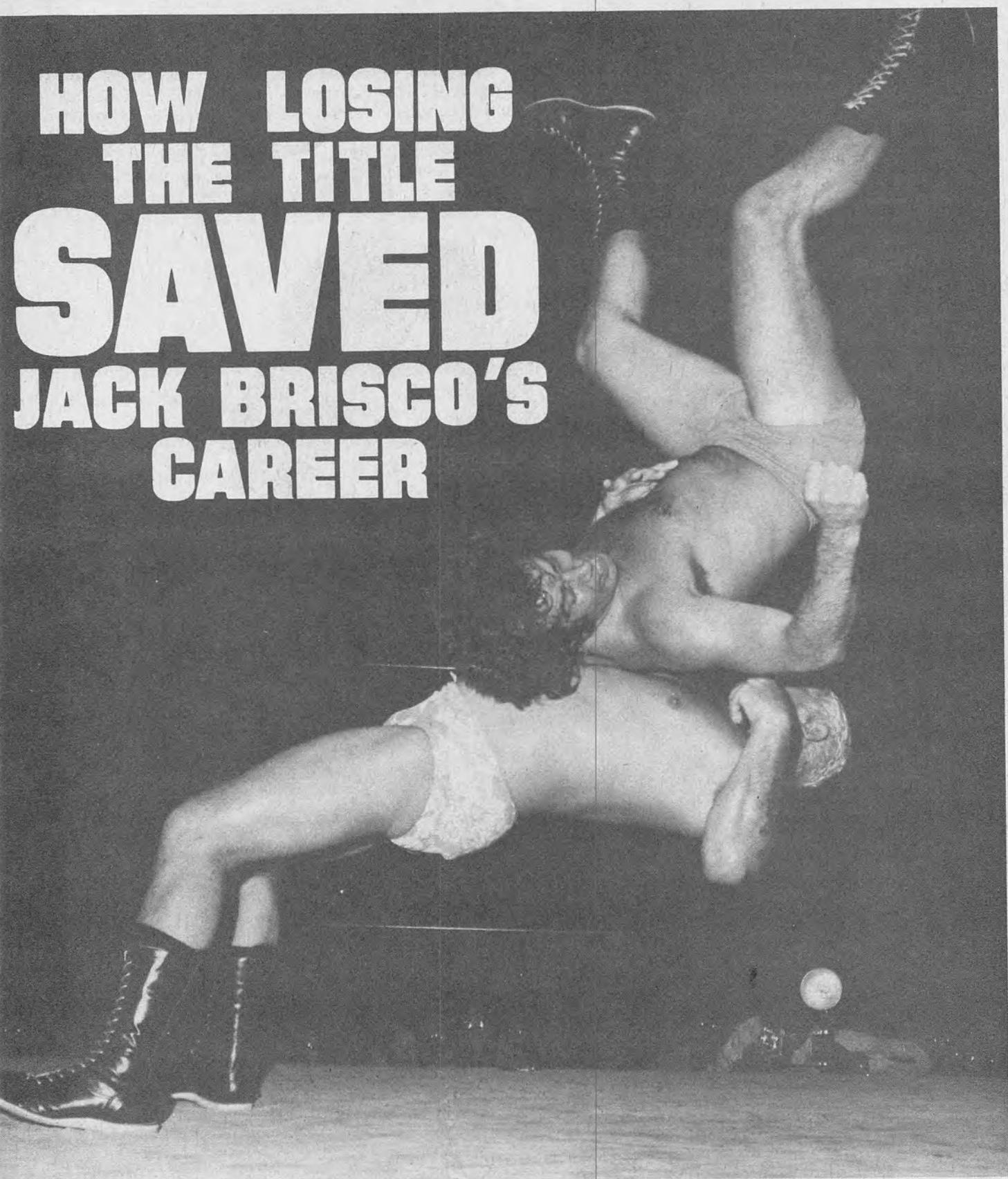
Recently, there has been much talk of promoting Chavo for a world championship shot. In a very short

time, the young man has shown he has the ability to be a titleholder as more and more opponents fall victim to his skills. Ever since a small group of wealthy Mexican businessmen put up one million dollars to promote Guerrero’s skills, Chavo has been trying to prove

(Continued on page 52)



HOW LOSING THE TITLE SAVED JACK BRISCO'S CAREER



Looking into the past and examining the future, Jack Brisco, a previous NWA king, tells what the championship years were like and why he may be better off without the weight of the belt around his waist

THE FIRST THING one notices about Jack Brisco, former champion, is how relaxed he seems. In the last months of his NWA title reign, Jack radiated tension. His hands never stopped moving. Sitting in one place for more than 15 minutes was an impossibility. Today, he is the picture of a man at peace with himself.

Even his laughter has changed. While champion, he would laugh in short, staccato rasps. Today, Jack's laughter is rich and mellow. He enjoys himself and he is not afraid to show it.

He has become considerate of others. While champion, he rarely went out of his way to make reporters comfortable. During a recent interview, Jack made sure everything was done for the reporters' enjoyment. He has time now for other people.

Expecting to find Brisco in a state of deep depression, one naturally remarked to Jack about his fine state of mind.

"Oh, I was pretty miserable for a couple of weeks after losing the title," Jack admitted, "and it wasn't a good idea to be around me. I had been used to being Jack Brisco, champion. It wasn't easy for me to see it would be worth anything to be just Jack Brisco."

"I slept a lot. I was in bed for 10, 15 hours a day. I just didn't want to get up. It's a common enough thing to happen." Jack smiled, shook his head, then added, "But I got bored being depressed."

"So I took a look at myself and learned a few things. The first thing I realized is I am still at the top of my profession. I can still defeat any wrestler alive. Knowing that, it's kind of difficult to feel sorry for yourself."

Jack held the championship from July 20, 1973, when he won it from Harley Race, until December 10, 1975, when he lost it to Terry Funk. He lost the title in December 1974 to Baba the Giant, but he won it back a week later. Jack spanned the globe defending his title (he lost to Baba and recaptured the title in Japan). He gained the respect of fans wherever he traveled.

After a man loses his title, it is usually time to reflect upon the glory years. He recalls the great moments and tends to forget his lesser victories. Though still active, he now becomes a part of history. It is a perspective on life few of us ever will know.

Some champions refuse to look back until years later. They don't want to feel part of the past until there is no way to escape from it. Jack is more than willing to talk about his reign. He



Harley Race supplexes Jack Brisco (left, opposite page) in the bout which saw Jack win the NWA title on July 20, 1973. Race tried to win the title back several times, but failed. Vicious animals like Abdullah the Butcher gave Jack some of his most trying times during his reign (above). He retained the title until December 10, 1975.

is confident about enjoying another one.

"I couldn't look back for a while," Jack readily admits. "It was too painful thinking of myself in the past tense. Then, I realized ignoring the past wouldn't make things different. Once you accept that, it doesn't hurt as much."

"I have a lot to be proud of. I defended my title successfully against the best men in my profession. You can't dream of doing more than that. And some of those battles were classic matches."

"I remember the matches against Dory Funk Jr. with particular pride. Other people called them the best

scientific wrestling they had ever seen. I'm proud to accept the compliment; I think it is deserved."

"I'm also proud of my successful defenses against Terry Funk. There were many before he finally took my title. And while we're on the subject of Texas grapplers, Jose Lothario and I had some wild matches in the best scientific style."

"I think there is something special about matches you win when the crowd is against you, like they are against me in Texas. The crowd makes a difference, and don't let anyone tell you differently. It is the mark of a real professional to win honorably when your every move is greeted with boos, I



also have to publicly thank some of the referees who never let the crowd dictate their decisions.

"Japan is great for honest officiating. When I won my title back from Baba, the referee could not have been fairer. Even though he naturally wanted the title to remain in Japan, he refused to let his feelings interfere with his sense of honesty. It is something I've always been grateful for."

Jack doesn't hesitate to name the dirtiest wrestler he faced in his championship reign: The dishonor belongs to Abdullah the Butcher.

"He was a maniac. You don't try to defeat him; you try to survive him. A lot of people said he didn't deserve a title shot. I don't know, maybe he didn't. But I felt I had to give all types



Jack sends Dory Funk Jr. flying (above left) during a classic title match. Baba the Giant chops Jack to take the title (left). Jack squares off with Terry Funk in 1973 (above). In 1975 he dethroned Jack.

of wrestlers a chance, and Abdullah had defeated all the major contenders.

"It was a crazy match. It didn't prove much except people can't say Jack Brisco avoided Abdullah. It's a small thing, compared to my other accomplishments, but I'm glad I did it."

Jack appears to be very contented and active as ex-champion. In fact, he seems much happier now there is no title pressure.

"The championship," Jack explains, "can wear you down until you're just a

(Continued on page 54)

WHY FRED BLASSIE IS WRESTLING'S MOST DANGEROUS MAN

THE VALISE IS scarred and battered. It has been all over the world more than once, in places most men wouldn't dare to travel. Still, it is sturdy and will be around for years to come. It is a lot like its owner, Freddie Blassie.

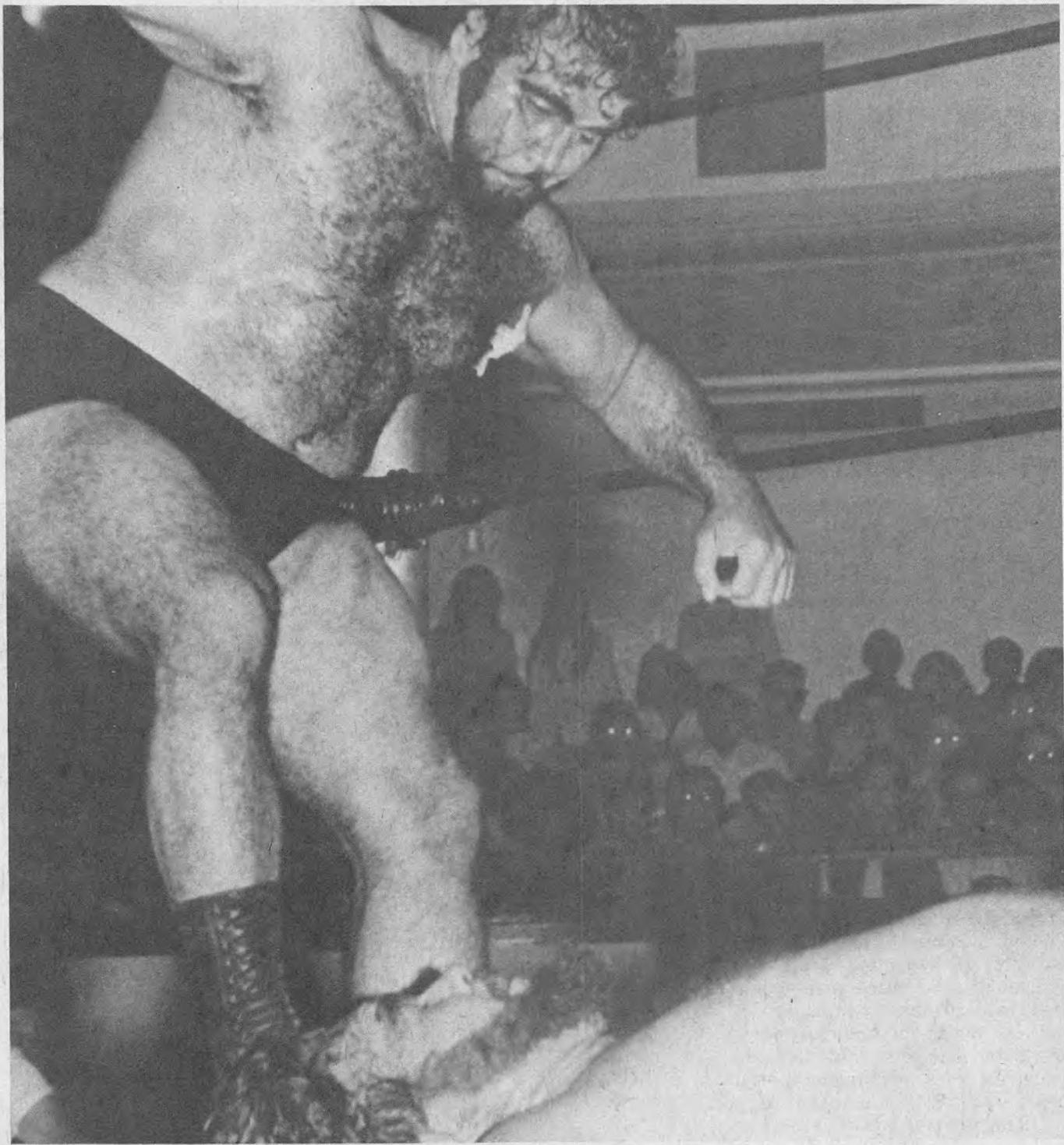
Blassie regularly scours the globe for the meanest, cruelest wrestlers to be found. Sometimes he will go off on a search after hearing no more than a rumor. If he hears of a wrestler being mangled, he immediately seeks out the mangler. This is just the type of guy Blassie wants to manage.

Every man Freddie manages has at least 10 crippled opponents to his "credit." Some have ended the careers of wrestling greats. It wouldn't seem these men would need to learn more dirty tricks, more savage tactics, or how to help a manager interfere. Yet, a man becomes twice as dangerous after being under Blassie's guidance.

Listing the men who have been or still are under contract to Blassie is to catalogue some of the most notorious men in wrestling. Nikolai Volkoff, Wolfman, Spiros Arion, Waldo Von Erich, Louie Cyr,



When Fred Blassie cut back on his wrestling, other wrestlers breathed a sigh of relief. They figured they had seen the end of Fred's brand of torture. But Blassie has surprised them—he has his own murderous crew to carry on his tradition!



Skandor Akbar stomps the head of Grizzly Smith. Blassie had spotted Skandor while the man from Saudi Arabia was grappling in the Louisiana territory.

Crusher Blackwell, and Skandor Akbar are men who can send chills of fear up the spine of any professional grappler. The last three men—Cyr, Blackwell, and Akbar—are currently warring for Blassie. Where they were found and how Freddie uses them reveals a great deal about one of the most merciless managers in wrestling.

"Louie Cyr," Blassie shouts in his famous rant, "is the product of the wilds of the Yukon, the most rugged place on earth. He has fought wild wolves, brought down elk with his bare hands, and wrestled walruses to the death. There is nothing this guy can't do."

"It took me six months to track this guy down. At first, he refused to leave the woods. After all, he was the head of a wolfpack. But I convinced him to follow me. When I want a man to be my wrestler, I don't quit until he signs on the dotted line."

"Look at him now. He is unbeatable. He can take any pencil-neck geek in wrestling—and that's anyone I don't have under contract—and tear him apart. Have you seen the photos of Cyr's victims? Take a look!"

Blassie then showed us some photos of men mangled too horribly to print in this magazine. He cackled as the pictures were shown, one after another. It was a convincing testament to Cyr's primitive savagery.

If Blassie was responsible only for Louie Cyr, he would be in the

running as being the most hated man in wrestling. However, there is much more for which Blassie can be condemned.

Crusher Blackwell is another man currently causing havoc for Freddie. From Stone Mountain, Georgia, this huge brawler is a terror against all meeting him. Blassie found this man grappling in the South and immediately signed him. Blackwell knew Freddie by reputation, so he didn't need any coaxing to sign a contract.

"This man will own the WWWF!" Blassie exclaims. "He is a phenomenon of nature. No man his size can be expected to move with Crusher's grace, yet he is astonishing when he moves. The man is unbelievable. And he is controlled by me, Freddie Blassie!"

"Mark my words: Crusher Blackwell will be the WWWF champion before January 1, 1977. There's no doubt about it!"

The improvement by Blackwell since being taken under Blassie's wing is phenomenal. The rough edges have been polished down. Blackwell is now a fine ring technician. Those who laughed at his backwoods clumsiness are now choking on their laughter. To watch Crusher wrestle is to understand fear.

To complete the present picture, there stands Skandor Akbar. Blassie read of this man's fearless brutality and flew down to New Orleans where the man from the Far East was wrestling. The manager needed to see only one match before he signed Akbar to a contract. They were on the next plane back north.

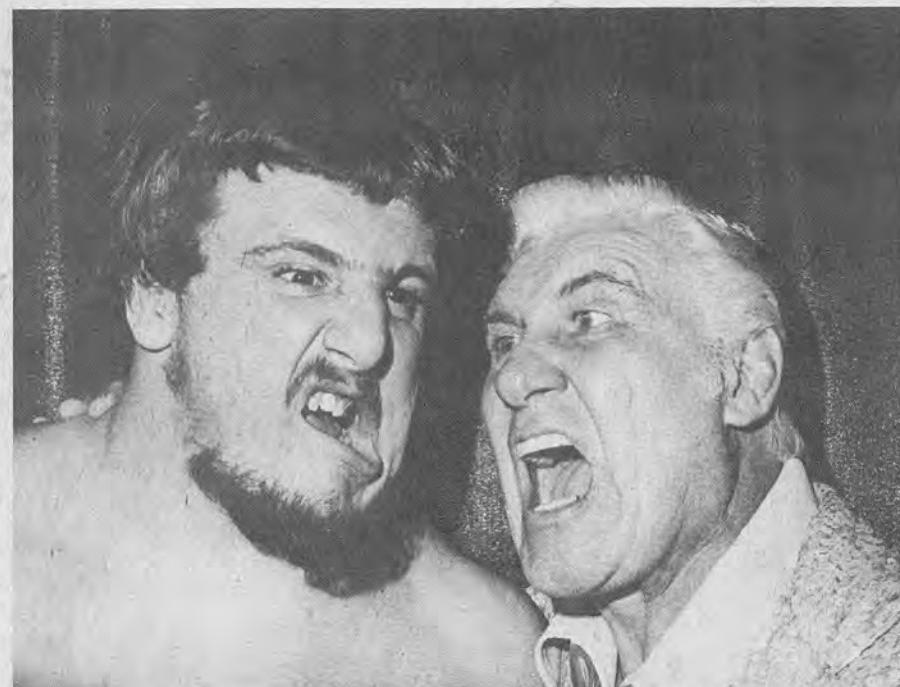
Those who knew of Skandor in New Orleans would be shocked to see him now. His every move has been modified by Blassie. He's twice as dangerous and twice as mean. His skill at tearing into an opponent is awesome to watch. Opponents being carried away on stretchers are a common sight in an Akbar match.

"When I think of what I've done for Skandor," Blassie remarks immodestly, "it almost makes me feel humble. There is no manager near my equal in brains and training skill. I made that man one of the most feared grapplers in the entire sport."

"People often ask me what's the secret of my genius. I have millions



From the wilds of the Yukon comes Blassie's protege Louie Cyr (above). Together they show what they think of WWWF champion Bruno Sammartino. Fred teaches biting techniques to Nikolai Volkoff (below). Volkoff, from Siberia, is one of Blassie's vicious clan.



of them—and I'll never reveal a single one! No manager will ever be able to match my accomplishments. I'll always be known as the best, even one hundred years after I'm dead.

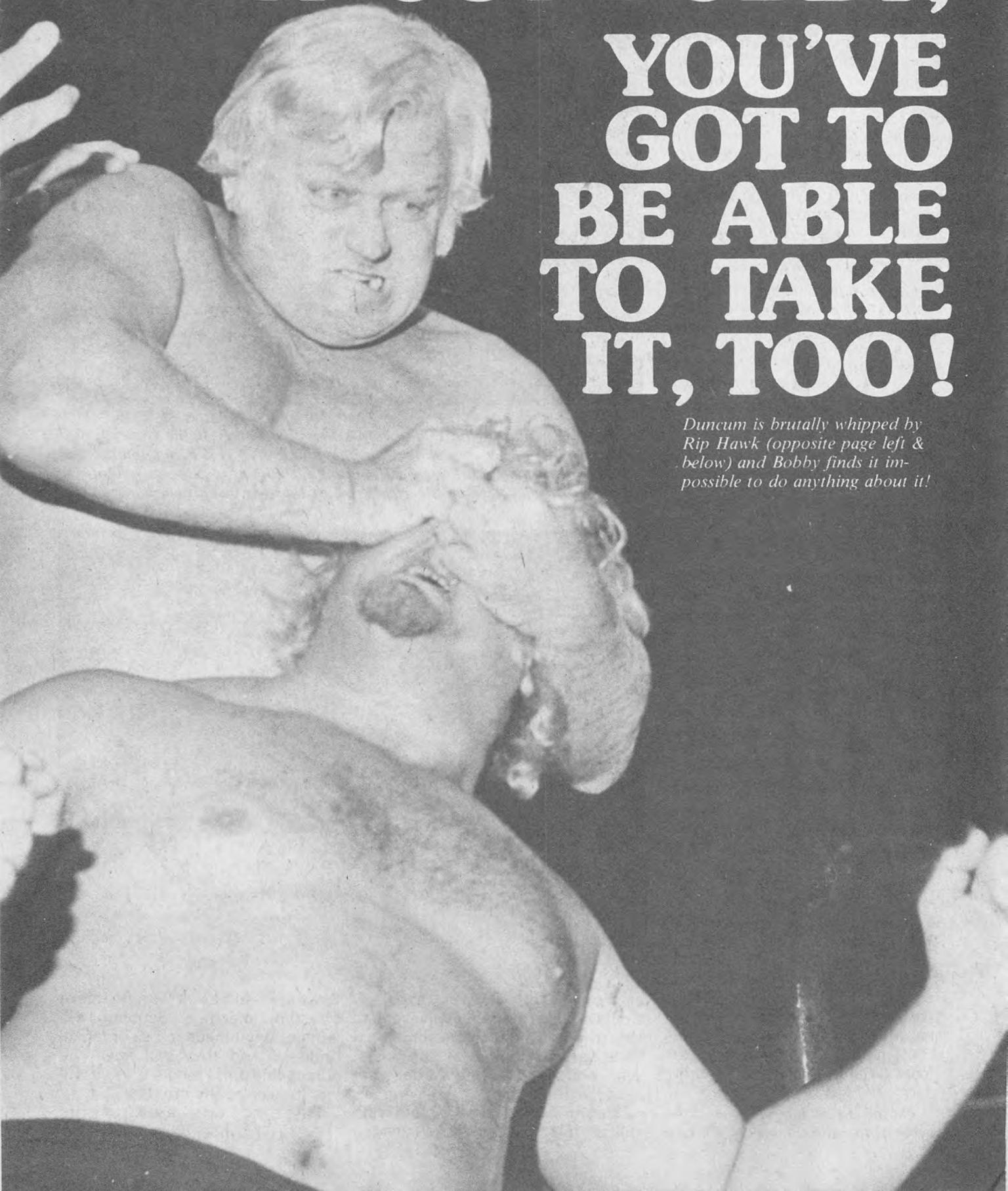
"Centuries from now, people will still be talking about how I made

Skandor Akbar a magnificent wrestling machine. Scholars will wonder what made me so great, so brilliant. And they will never be able to find out! Freddie Blassie will live forever as the greatest!"

There is one area of the
(Continued on page 60)

**IF YOU DISH
IT OUT BOBBY,
YOU'VE
GOT TO
BE ABLE
TO TAKE
IT, TOO!**

Duncum is brutally whipped by Rip Hawk (opposite page left & below) and Bobby finds it impossible to do anything about it!





PHOTOS BY GENE GORDON

It appears Bobby Duncum is having his share of trouble when it comes to fighting fire with fire. Wrestling other notorious rulebreakers is just not Bobby's cup of tea!

BOBBY DUNCUM IS a cruel bruiser who delights in hearing the agonizing screams of his opponents as he tortures the victim. Scientific wrestlers have been crippled by Duncum. Great champions have had their toughest matches against this ruthless breaker of everything the rule book has to offer.

To call Bobby aggressive does not stress his style enough. He goes after his prey and never lets up. It is rare when anyone can gain the upper hand when confronted with this vicious ring tactician.

There have been those rare occasions when the blond-haired terror has himself been the victim of wrestlers with a similar style to his. And in these instances, Bobby Duncum really doesn't thrive. He just can't seem to cut it.

"I was surprised," notes Dick Slater. "I wrestled Duncum when my style was similar to his and I

think I kicked his butt. I'd heard about his reputation and was looking forward to a real street fight. But the guy couldn't take his own medicine. He ran from me.

"I respect Duncum," he adds. "He's a great wrestler. But against a guy with a style like his own, he doesn't make it. He should stick to wrestling the fan favorites."

Duncum will not hesitate to discuss the situation. After asking him why he can't take what he dishes out when he wrestles another rule breaker, Bobby says, "It's a matter of shock. You see I just cannot accept the fact there are other guys in this business trying to be as rough as me. So when I am confronted with someone with that style, I just freeze up. I can't accept it."

"In a short time though I hope to have this thing cleared up in my mind," Bobby continued. "That's why you'll see me wrestling other

guys with a similar style more often."

Bobby should try to clear his mind soon for those situations. In a recent match he squared off against the hated Rip Hawk. Rip Hawk is one of the most notorious men around, who will do anything to win. He doesn't give a damn. Sound familiar? It should. That's Duncum's style.

Wrestling Hawk proved to be a mild disaster for Bobby. Hawk was taking a beating at the beginning of the encounter. But he soon made a comeback a few minutes into the match and began to work on Bobby with Duncum's own tactics.

Eye raking, stomping and biting were just some of the things Bobby was subjected to. And instead of battling back, the usually aggressive Duncum seemed almost helpless.

Showing a little improvement
(Continued on page 56)

HOTSEAT

SUPERSTAR BILLY GRAHAM: “I'M TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE!”

HE'S KNOWN THROUGHOUT the world as one of wrestling's most charismatic figures. A member of one of the great grappling families, he made a name for himself with his tremendous feats of strength, outclassing many of the best known wrestling strongmen. Giving himself the title "Superstar," he has vowed he will soon be world champion. And he has the talent to take him to that very spot. He is Superstar Billy Graham.

- Q: Welcome to the "Hotseat," Billy.
A: That's Superstar—not Billy. You can call me Star for short.
Q: Okay. Let's go into your background. What is your height and weight?
A: I'm six-foot four, two hundred and seventy-five pounds. I have a fifty-five inch chest, twenty-two inch arms, and a thirty inch waist.
Q: Since beginning your career, you've called yourself the "Muhammad Ali of Wrestling," among other complimentary names. Why do you compare yourself to him?
A: The way I project myself to the people of the world is just like Muhammad does. He is admired.

So am I. He is great. So am I. Daddy, I'm too good to be true!
Q: Many people consider you a big mouth.

A: They're jealous. They wish they

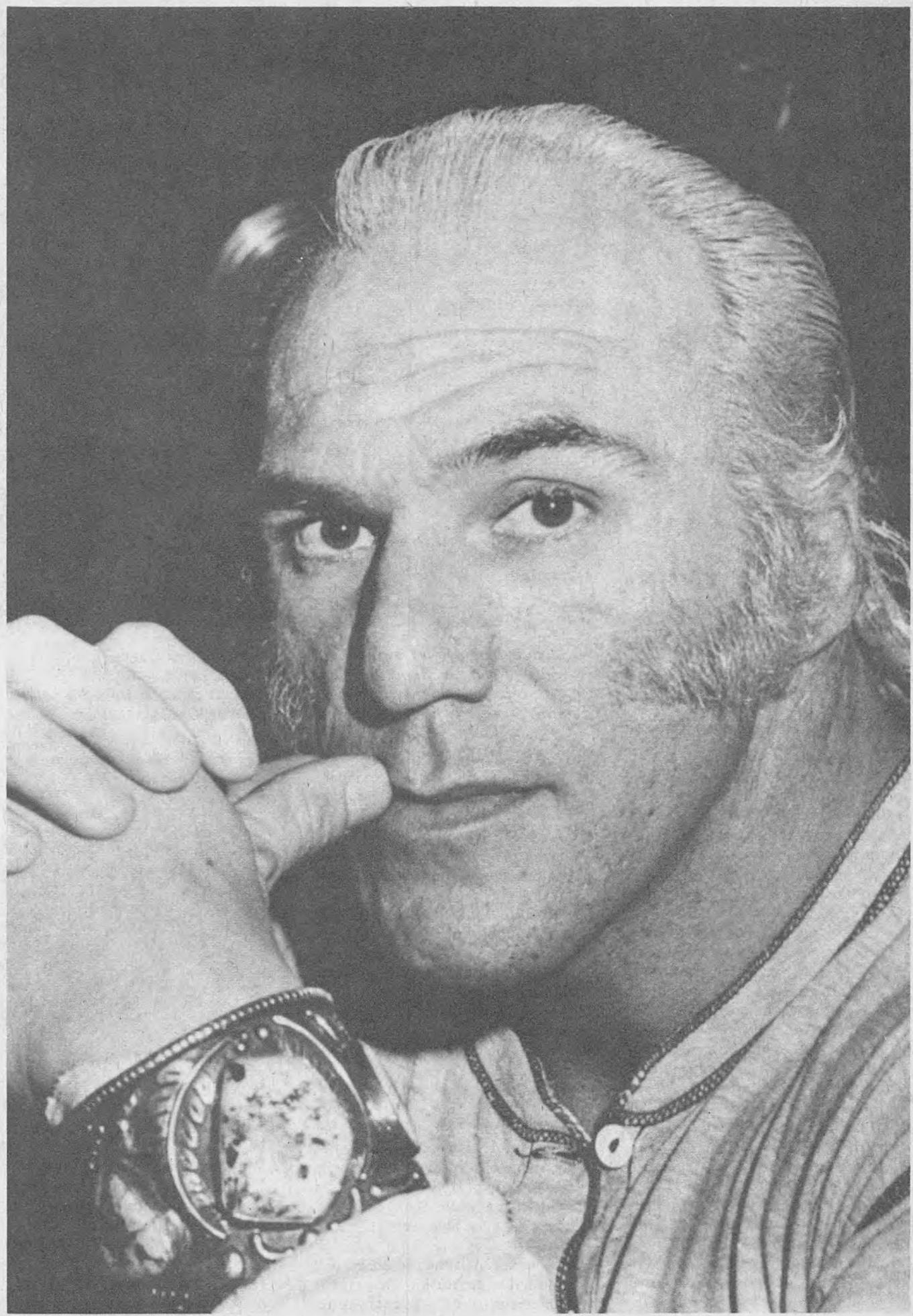
“
**EVERYTHING
ABOUT ME IS
SUPER. I
OUTSHADOW
EVERYBODY ELSE!**
”

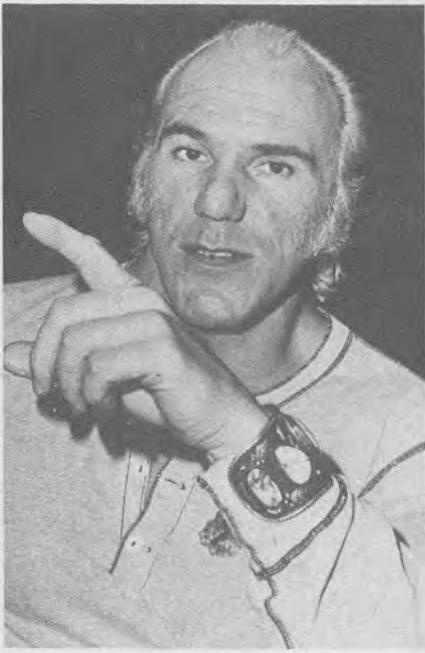
were in my place. They wish they could speak their mind in front of the public. It's a heavy opportunity and baby I'm there. Those calling me a big mouth have yet to arrive—if they're getting there at all.

Q: Where was your first pro match?
A: In Los Angeles. I don't recall the

name of the unfortunate thing I beat. My brother, Dr. Jerry Graham, was there to advise me. It was a breeding period for me in L.A.

- Q: Where did you go from there?
A: To San Francisco where I became Pat Patterson's tag team partner.
Q: Did you use the Graham name as a crutch when you first started?
A: No. I didn't need it as a crutch, but I guess being from that great family did help.
Q: For the right money, would you wrestle another member of the Graham family?
A: Absolutely. In racecar driving, the Unser brothers oppose each other. It's a money issue. For big paydays, brothers have played against each other in football. I don't care who I wrestle, as long as the price is right.
Q: Why do you call yourself "Superstar?"
A: When you stop to think of it, everything about me is super. What I represent—the clothes I wear—is super. I outshadow everybody else. The cars I drive, the people I associate with, governors, other politicians. I just have a





**“
THE GOVERNOR
AND EVEN
PEOPLE HIGHER
UP PROTECTED
GAGNE FROM ME!
”**

super image!

Q: Years ago you had a feud with Mil Mascaras. You haven't wrestled him in quite a while now. Do you think you could beat him since both of you have come such a long way in your careers?

A: No question about it. I'm much stronger than I was back then. I'm better mentally and physically. I was almost a beginner then and I destroyed him. I'm Superstar Graham and he's a Mexican peon!

Q: For many years you campaigned in the AWA and received numerous title shots against then champion Verne Gagne. Why didn't you win the title?

A: Hometown decisions!

Q: Oh, come on Billy, we can't buy that.

A: In each match the point of decision was so controversial the decision had to be made by local judges. The matches were never clear-cut wins for him. Gagne took good care of the judges, the commission, even the governor, just so I wouldn't win!



Graham's wars against former AWA champion Verne Gagne (above) are considered classics. Superstar claims that Gagne never won fairly and he was the victim of hometown decisions. Wahoo McDaniel is yet another wrestler who has had his hands full with Graham (below).

Q: That's ridiculous!

A: It's not. The governor and even people higher up protected Gagne from losing to me. They were afraid I'd get control of the title and then the name Gagne would become synonymous with garbage pickers.

Q: Did you think Nick Bockwinkle was capable of beating Gagne? You and Nick were good friends, and few people knew him better than you.

A: I think Nick won the title on a fluke.

Q: Would you have accepted the belt on a fluke?

A: Of course! Gagne kept it on flukes most of the time. They should name Gagne "Kreskin." He has ESP, daddy. He can tell just when the judges are going to let him win. It's amazing. It proves a point I made just a while ago.

Q: That Gagne has an "in" with officials?

A: Oh yeah. One time I wrestled him in Omaha, Nebraska. He and the referee were calling each other



by their nicknames!

Q: You expect us to believe this?

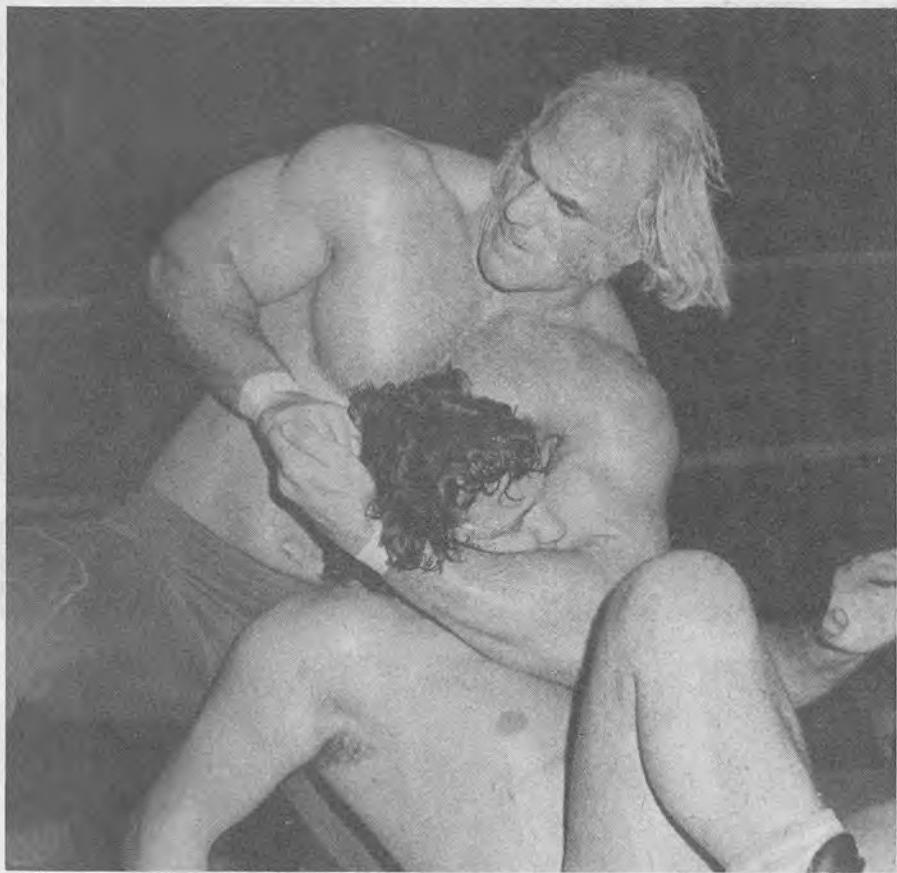
A: Honest, it's true. Superstar doesn't lie.

Q: Why did you leave the AWA?

A: Daddy, there's more to the world than just the midwest. There's the area Sammartino rules.

Q: You really want that WWWF belt of Bruno's, don't you?

A: Oh yes. I'm so much better than he is. Each time I kick him in the



Superstar has Billy Robinson in pain (above). Graham's dream is to win the WWWF title from Bruno Sammartino (left) by late 1976.

couldn't believe it. They knew I was winning. But Sammartino's relatives—the judges and the referee—stopped the match when they saw he was losing.

Q: Why didn't you try for Bruno's title years ago?

A: I wanted to. But I was kept out by Congressmen, Senators, the Pentagon—they went all the way to the top to keep me away from Bruno. But the main man, The Grand Wizard, finally swung the big deal, baby, and now Bruno's title will be mine!

Q: Don't you think this is going a bit too far—accusing those people of helping Bruno?

A: No. Wait until he dies; they'll take down the Statue of Liberty and put Bruno up there. Wait and see!

Q: Many times you have armwrestled other wrestlers. When you seem to be losing the contest, you usually kick out the table, sending your opponent crashing to the mat with the table. Then you stomp him. Why?

head he realizes it more.

Q: You use dirty tactics in your matches against Bruno. Why?

A: Every tactic I can think of is good for him. I'll do anything to win that belt. If I had to hit a man with a two-by-four, I'd do it!

Q: Why did you lose to Bruno in a recent New York match?

A: I beat him the first time. The second time, I was cut, so they stopped the match. The people



**I'LL DO ANYTHING
TO WIN THE BELT.
I'D HIT A
MAN WITH A
TWO-BY-FOUR
TO WIN!**

- A:** That's a lie!
Q: One time you kicked Ken Patera low while he was lifting weights during a contest with you. We have photographic proof!
A: Retouched photos. I have never lost an armwrestling or weightlifting contest.
Q: Why did you do that to Ken Patera?
A: What?
Q: Kick him while he was weight-lifting.
A: I must have slipped or something. Maybe I was passing by him and he stumbled over me. Oh yeah, now I remember. I was going to congratulate him for doing well, when he tried to bash the weight on my head. Damn sore loser!
Q: Would you armwrestle Bruno?
A: I have posted twenty-five thousand bucks with WWWF promoters to get Bruno to armwrestle me. It's been months now and Sammartino hasn't accepted.
Q: Thank you, Billy.
A: That's superstar, baby. The one and only! □

ANDRE THE GIANT vs... THE SIX MILLION DOLLAR MAN!

**The gigantic,
hairy monster
on ABC-TV's "The
Six Million Dollar
Man" was played by
none other than Andre
The Giant. But will
Andre forsake
the world of wrestling
for a career in acting?**

UNDER THE SEVERAL layers of greasepaint, crepe hair, and latex molding, it was nearly impossible to recognize the figure standing in the middle of the television shooting set. Yet underneath the theatrical disguise stood Andre the Giant, preparing to shoot another scene.

"When I call action," the director told Andre, "pick up the tree trunk and throw it at Lee Majors. He will catch it. Then you begin to attack him. Ready? Action!"

Several tourists were on hand to watch the scene with Andre, guest-starring as the legendary Bigfoot in an episode of ABC Television's "The Six Million Dollar Man," the series

starring Lee Majors as a bionic man. In one of his rare departures from the wrestling arena, Andre was signed to star in the special two-part episode.

The shows, which aired on ABC February 1 and February 4, had Majors (who portrays Steve Austin, a man possessing superhuman abilities) confront a huge, hairy creature in the wilderness he believes to be the legendary Bigfoot.

One tourist on the Universal Studios set, Jeff Bergman of Merrick, New York, said, "At first I couldn't believe it when the tour guide told us that hairy creature was Andre the Giant. I had just seen him wrestle in New York the week before, and now here he was again."

Of course, the makeup made it difficult to see Andre's face completely. But when he stood up, I could see how tall he was. Then I knew for sure it was Andre the Giant. It would be impossible for me to describe

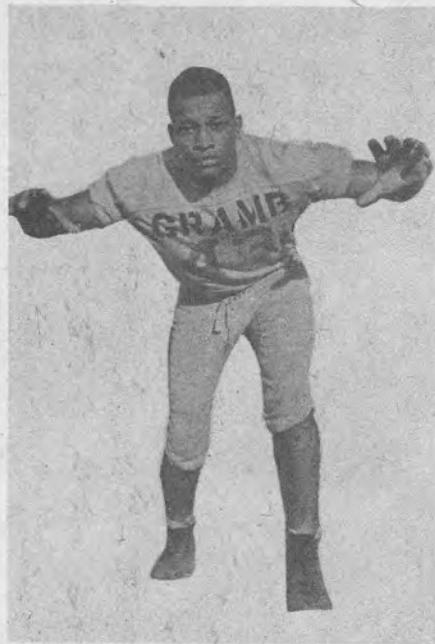
(Continued on page 58)



ERNIE LADD:



**THE
COMPLETE
LIFE STORY
OF WRESTLING
CONTROVERS**



Left: Ernie as a child in Moton Elementary School; the photo is from 1946. Left: Ernie Ladd as he appeared in his Grambling College football days where he learned his skills under coach Eddie Robinson. Below: Ernie's mother, Mrs. Louada Ford, has a plaque honoring her famed son.



Controversy plays a big part in wrestling. Perhaps its most controversial figure is Ernie Ladd, whose career has been furious since it began. He is loved in some areas—hated in others, yet everyone respects him. And now here is a look at what went into molding this great athlete

The Biggest Man In Pro Football



Bulldozing through New York Titans line, San Diego Chargers' Ernie Ladd (above) demonstrates mighty power that makes him one of football's most punishing maulers. At right, he works out under supervision of line coach Chuck Noll.

Ernie Ladd, six-foot-nine, 315-pound San Diego tackle, crunches way to top

MAGINE for a moment that you are a fleet-footed quarterback in the American Football League. It is a sunny Sunday afternoon, and as some 25,000 fans cheer wildly, you take the snap-

by second-rate colleagues or castoffs from Canada and the N.F.L., and sandlot football they played bore scant resemblance to the tightly disciplined N.F.L. brand. That first season, one team scored four touchdowns in 20 min. to salvage a 38-38 tie; another opened up a 30-0 half-time lead, still had to kick a last-second field goal to win, 33-30.

than that of the Big Ten than the N.F.L. Remarks like "we're like a team in which A.F.L. coaches as San Diego's Sid Gillman and New York's Webb Efird—both of whom coached title-winning teams in the N.F.L. before switching. "The two leagues are absolutely equal now," says Gillman. "Our top teams are every bit as good as the top teams in the N.F.L., and our



coaches are enthusiastic about Namath. "He drops back quickly, releases quickly, has a strong arm, and a winning attitude."

Like Andre the Giant, though,

"When he gets a good offensive line and capable receivers, he'll really be something."

What makes the A.F.L. really mad is criticism of its defenses—and it gets plenty. "They don't rush the passer," says one National League coach. "Their quarterbacks have all day to get the ball off." And they argue that such "sophisticated" maneuvers as the safety blitz are actually pirated A.F.L. inventions. And when it comes to sheer size and strength on defense, the A.F.L. refuses to take a back seat to anybody. The defensive line of the champion Buffalo Bills averages 275 lbs. per man—18 lbs. per man more than the N.F.L.'s champion Browns. Then there are the San Diego Chargers. Defense line End Jimmy Brown, 220 lbs., would be a big man on anybody's bulldog, but he looks like an undersized schoolboy next to Tackler Ernie Ladd, who stands 6 ft. 9 in., weighs 315 lbs.

Could Jimmy Brown run through Ernie Ladd? Nobody knows. As far as San Diego Coach Gillman is concerned, the time has come to find out. "Let's quit arguing," says Gillman, "and start playing."

RODEO King of the Rope

Like the professional golfer, the rodeo cowboy is a nomad of sport—roaming from town to town, plying his trade in a succession of arenas, paying his own way and earning only what he

As a tackle for the San Diego Chargers, Ernie was seen in Life Magazine with assistant coach Chuck Noll (above), who would go on to be head coach of the Pittsburgh Steelers. Ernie also appeared in Time magazine with superstars Joe Namath and Lance Alworth (left) as the three top men in the AFL.



LADDO
NAMATH
ALWORTH

weaker teams are every bit as strong as the weaker N.F.L. teams."

That might be an overstatement. Yet much as the A.F.L. coaches like to talk about the A.F.L.'s "weak defense" and "basketball scores," the facts do not bear them out. So far this season, an average of 41 points has been scored in each A.F.L. game; N.F.L. teams have scored an average of 45. The top num-

BACK IN THE early 1960s, one of the most publicized professional athletes was a football player for the San Diego Chargers named Ernie Ladd. One of the most publicized professional athletes today is a wrestler named Ernie Ladd, the self-proclaimed "King of Wrestling."

How did Ernie Ladd, superstar football player, become Ernie Ladd, superstar wrestler?

"Let me explain something most fans don't understand," Ernie says of his conversion, "I didn't just start wrestling when I stepped out of football. I was making money as a wrestler while playing pro football. I made so much money while wrestling, I decided to leave football and stick to wrestling."

"If more football players understood wrestling—and their coordination was good enough—they would quit football today! To me, professional wrestling is one of the greatest sports there is in the world."

It's a funny thing, how I was initiated into professional wrestling. People like Freddie Blassie and The Destroyer would come down to the football field and intimidate me. They would say, 'He's pretty tough on that football field, but how would he be in the wrestling ring?' I didn't know who these people were, so I would say to them, 'You people get away from me. I don't want to have anything to do with you.' I thought wrestlers were crazy.

"They kept intimidating me for about six months. So one day, I went down to the wrestling arena. I went over to a guy weighing about 230 pounds, and he rubbed my nose in the canvas for about 20 minutes. I didn't know anything about wrestling at the time. They just

G'S MOST TALL ATHLETE



Ernie's wife, Mrs. Roslyn Ladd (above), a woman who has not only earned the grappler's love but also his infinite respect.

rubbed me around. They didn't hurt me or break anything, but they let me know they were boss; that you really had to be on the ball to succeed as a wrestler. This was enough to intimidate me. I started training as a wrestler."

Ernie seemed destined to be a professional athlete from the beginning. Even as a child, he was larger than most of the other children in the small town of Orange, Texas, a sparsely populated, rural area. Ladd was raised by his stepfather, James Ford. "My stepfather," says Ernie, "was probably the finest man I have ever met in my life. He would give me the last shirt off his back. Probably the greatest thing that ever happened to me was my stepfather.

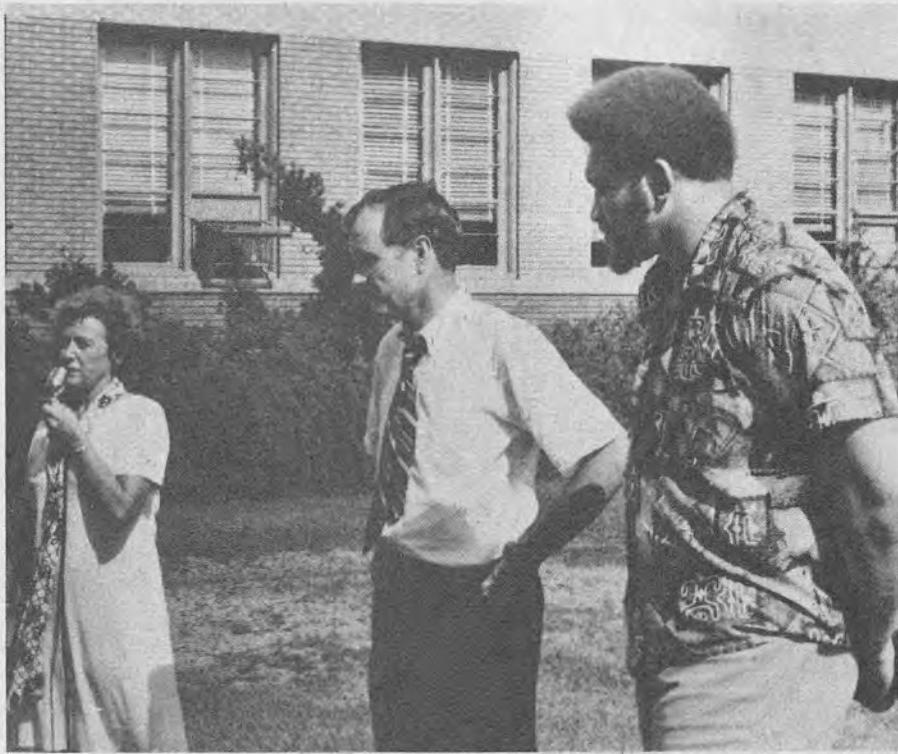
"He was a very devoted man when it came to bringing money home. I never really had to suffer as a child. I didn't have extra money in my pocket like other kids, but what the hell, you can't win them all. He helped me pursue my goal for a career as a professional athlete. No one else from Orange, Texas, was a professional athlete. I wanted to be the first.

"In high school, I played football under the direction of Willie Ray Smith—who is the father of Bubba Smith of the Houston Oilers. Then I played under the direction of the famed Eddie Robinson at Grambling College in Louisiana. I went on to play football with the San Diego Chargers, then the Houston Oilers, then Kansas City. But by that point I had made my decision to become a full-time professional wrestler.



Above: Ernie pays a social visit to former Buffalo Bill quarterback and current U.S. Congressman Jack Kemp. Below: Ladd meets with National Baseball League MVP Joe Morgan, L.A. Dodger center-fielder Jimmy Wynn, former football star and now movie star Jim Brown, and Scott Louis. Ernie has friends in every sport field.





Ernie has appeared for public appearances with men as important as George Bush (above), the man who is now in charge of foreign intelligence for the United States. Despite the pressures of his public life, however, Ernie still finds time to cheer on his alma mater's football team from an honored place on the Grambling sideline (below). Ernie is never too busy to lend a hand to his former football coach Eddie Robinson, a man he deeply admires.



Ernie happily poses with two of his sons for a national magazine ad. Both hope to be professional athletes and their father is ready with advice.

"My first wrestling opponent was Art "Boom Boom" Mahalik. I beat him in 17 seconds. In the papers the next day it said: "Ernie Ladd Pins Man in 17 seconds." The next time I beat a man in one minute, 12 seconds. The papers wanted to know why it took me so long!"

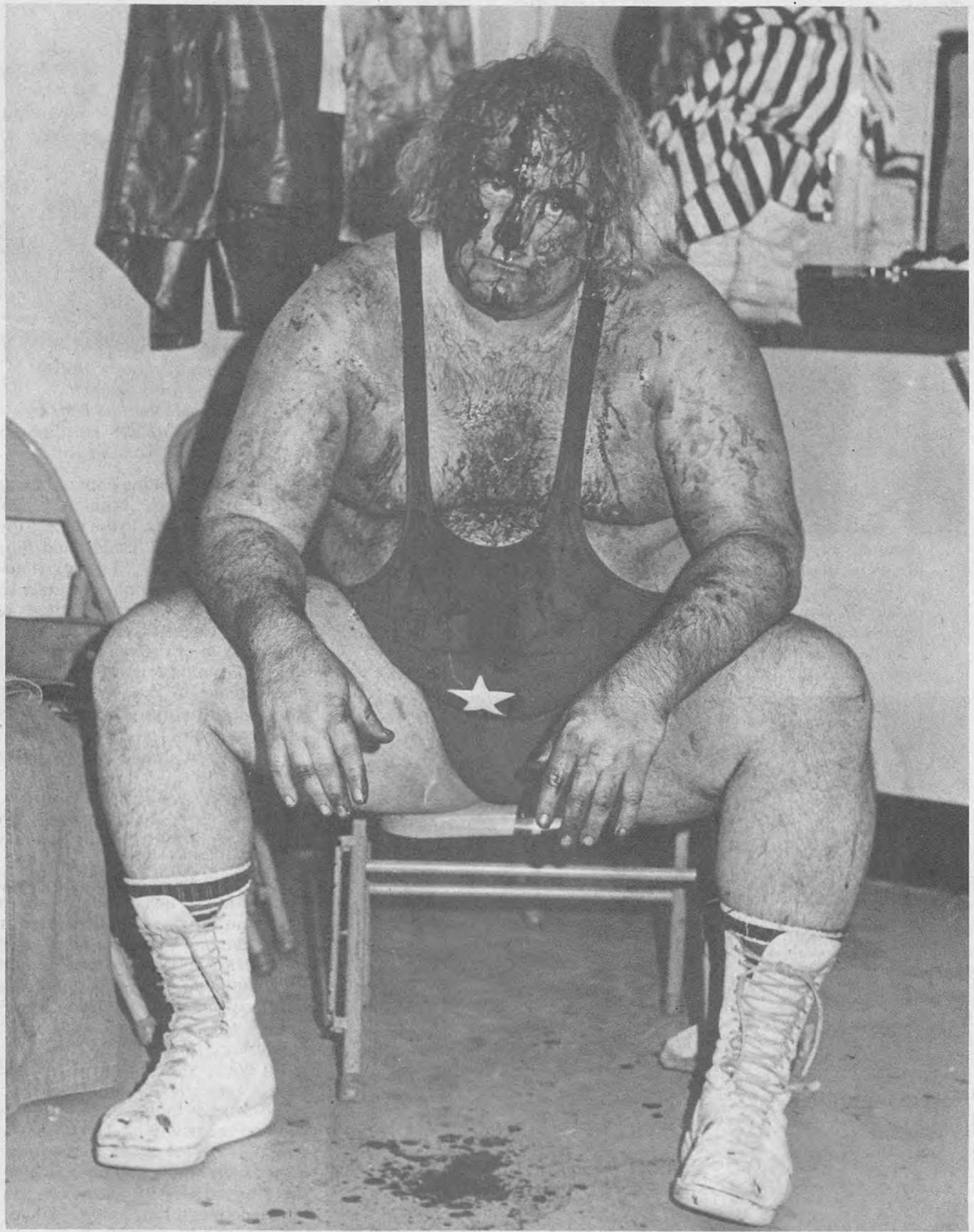
Since his professional wrestling debut, Ernie has risen to the top of the profession. Yet it sometimes seems Ladd suffers from a Jeckle and Hyde complex: In some towns he is cheered, in some towns he is booed.

"I don't have a personality problem," Ernie states flatly. "I am not schizophrenic. It all boils down to this: I might go into an arena where they build up a local hero, and he might be an All-American boy. I go out there and they start applauding for this other ham—and I know he's a ham and they should be applauding for me. And when I get it on him and beat him up real good, they start booing and screaming."

"In some areas, they just cheer for me. I wrestle the same wherever I go. There are those people who say I've had feuds with a lot of different wrestlers. I have never had a feud. Periodically there has been a man who has not seen things my way. So I have to teach him things—sometimes verbally, sometimes physically."

"I don't care who the guy is. I don't care if he's black or he's white, or if he's blue, green, red, yellow. If he is wrong, I will straighten him out. I don't care if he's 6-9, 6-10, or

(Continued on page 62)



PHOTOS BY SCOTT TEAL

BLOODBATH IN

Foreign objects, blood pouring like a waterfall—Jackie Fargo and Phil Hickerson were at war with each other. It was a violent battle which the state of Tennessee won't forget for years

DROPLETS OF blood splashed into the scarlet pool on the floor. Jackie Fargo sat listlessly in his dressing room, his blood gushing from wounds covering his face. He was past pain. He waited quietly for the doctor to stitch up his gashes.

Fargo's left arm rested heavily on his thigh. He was unable to lift it. Every muscle from his wrist to his shoulder was numb. He could feel nothing in the appendage. He would not even begin to estimate how long it would take for the damage to be repaired. He did not even want to know.

Jackie was a pathetic sight. His eyes aimlessly wandered from floor to ceiling, then back to the injured arm hanging at his side. Those near him could feel nothing but sorrow and sympathy over what had just occurred. Sympathy was the last thing Fargo needed. He needed medical attention.

Yet he could not stop talking in fits from time to time. This helped to keep his mind off the pain which would surely follow after the numbness went away.

"After the third time Condry hit it with the pipe," Fargo said of the attack on his arm, "I didn't feel any more pain. I didn't feel anything. I thought it had dropped off. I couldn't move it to save myself."

"Because I was bleeding so badly, I could hardly see him. All I could make out was some vague shape. I didn't even know it was Dennis Condry attacking me until someone told me a few minutes ago. But I am glad I know who did it now. I owe him something. I deserved to win this match. I did not deserve to be crippled in it!"

(Continued on page 64)



Waiting for the doctor to stitch him up, Phil Hickerson (left, opposite page) looks like he's about to pass out. Dennis Condry interferes and smashes Jackie Fargo with a lead pipe (above) to help his friend Hickerson. It was a brutal battle until the end.

TENNESSEE

THREE ARE MANY things a person can do with \$20,000. There are many things a person will do for \$20,000. And a battle royal is usually where people will do it!

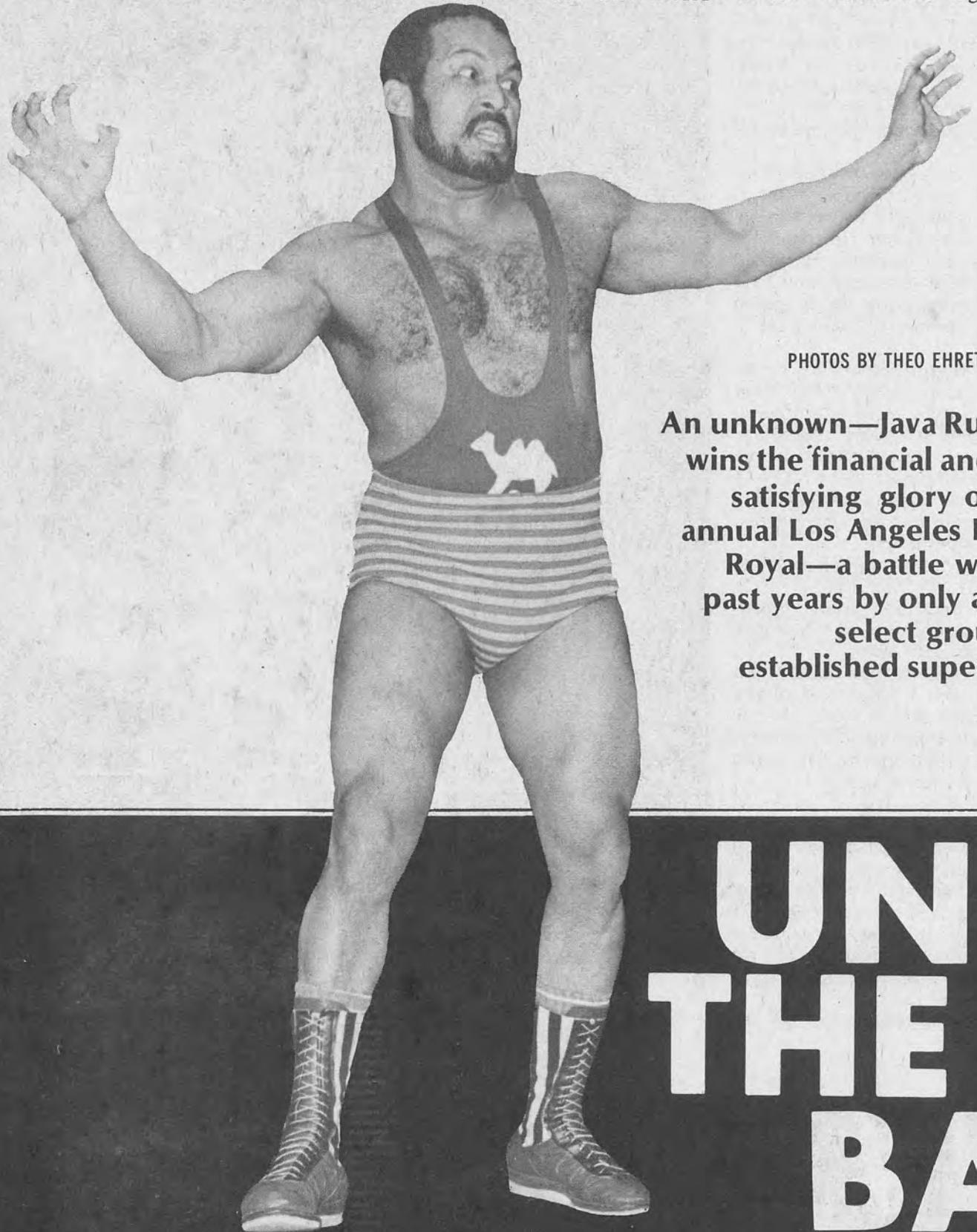
The Los Angeles battle royal is one of the most prestigious of these contests in the world. Winning this battle is a dream of every wrestler. This

year, a \$20,000 prize would go to the winner. And as with any battle royal, only broken dreams would remain for the losers.

The week before the momentous spectacle, wrestlers from all over the world traveled to California. Many had been devising new strategies for the match for months. Some needed

the money; all wanted it; none would surrender it without battling until his last ounce of strength had been spent. Each man was determined, if he should be forced to leave, to take at least one other man with him.

The night of a battle royal is special—something extraordinary fills the air. When 22 men engage in a



PHOTOS BY THEO EHRET

An unknown—Java Ruuk—wins the financial and ego satisfying glory of the annual Los Angeles Battle Royal—a battle won in past years by only a very select group of established superstars

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THE L
BAT**

brawl, knowing only one will win, there is a sense of reckless abandon unequaled by any other event. It can be felt by everyone present. It must be experienced to be understood.

Even the dressing rooms are strange. Usually, no man must dress next to his opponent. On this evening, each wrestler finds himself surrounded by foes. Nobody looks anyone else in the eye. Each knows there exists the possibility he may cripple the man next to him, or he may be crippled by that man. The variables are many. They are almost as plentiful as the risks.

Every wrestler knows the chances of winning a battle royal are slim. Only huge men, like Andre the Giant and Ernie Ladd, can count on more than luck to make them the winner. In fact, Andre has less chance of winning nowadays because other wrestlers devise elaborate strategies to eliminate him. So, it takes incredible confidence to even participate.

Also, it takes \$1,000 for a wrestler to enter the Los Angeles battle royal. The entrance fee for most of the men will be lost money. It is an expensive price to pay for a chance at a dream. It is easily the worst gamble in professional sports.

Still, they travel from all over the world for this special night. They come for that special feeling a battle royal gives a participant. That excitement, according to the wrestlers, is cheap at half the price.

So, one by one they enter the field of battle. The crowd cheers or jeers as names are announced. But the men don't hear them; they are too busy staring at each other. Now is the time to engage in a war of nerves. Each man searches for a slight limp or some other



All hell breaks loose (above) as wrestlers mix it up in efforts to eliminate other grapplers. Porkchop Cash and Bob Orton Sr. work over Ruuk as John Tolos heads to join in the fracas. Tolos gets to his destination (below) and tries to oust Porkchop with Ruuk's help. Cash fought back and remained in for quite a while.



NOW N WINS OS ANGELES TLE ROYAL!



Tony Rocco and Black Gordman are the center of battle (above) and Bengali is headed their way. Java and Greg Valentine go all out to oust huge Andre the Giant (right).



As the participants get fewer, Ruuk helps lessen the load (above). The action gets wilder (right). Poor Pat Patterson (below)—Andre the Giant is about to pitch Pat several feet and then toss him out of action.



barely perceptible injury. All reports and rumors are being mentally catalogued. As 22 professional battlers stare at each other with determination, fans watch in stunned silence. Only the bell sounding to start the contest breaks the silence. Then all hell breaks loose.

At first, this Los Angeles battle royal resembled a wild whirlwind of fists and feet. Those unfamiliar with the methods of battle royals guessed the wrestlers were randomly beating

any human coming within reach. They couldn't have been more wrong. Each man was purposely attacking another, using the careening bodies as a weapon. If a victim can be maneuvered into a stumbling grappler, both men will be hurt by the collision. And the more men hurt in the beginning, the greater the chance of the attacker becoming the eventual winner.

The last thing any wrestler wants is a long battle royal. It is very dangerous in that large crowd. Crippling accidents are common. The longer the ring is filled with wrestlers, the greater the chance of injury. That is why the action is so incredibly furious in the opening moments. Every man is determined to get as many men as possible out quickly—or get himself out of there in the attempt. The time when it is necessary to take risks is in the opening moments.

Slowly but surely, the crowd in the Los Angeles ring thinned out. Men toppled over the ropes and crashed to the concrete floor, losing their money and their dreams of glory. It is difficult to say which hurt more.



Porkchop Cash tries to put a finishing pin on Java Ruuk (above left) but is thwarted by Ernie Ladd. Ernie continues his assault (above right). Meanwhile, Ruuk is getting plenty of time to recover. Porkchop wins the battle against Ladd as he tosses the big man over the ropes (below), turning his back on Ruuk. That was the beginning of the end for him. Ruuk attacked Porkchop from behind, tossed him out of the ring, and became the winner.



There were surprises throughout the contest. Andre the Giant, winner of more battle royals than any man alive, couldn't withstand the concentrated attack of half a dozen top wrestlers. He survived this assault longer than any man could honestly hope to do. However, he finally fell to the relentless battering. As his gargantuan bulk fell crashing to the cement, hundreds of people reached into their pockets to pay off bets. More people made informal bets on Andre's chances than any other grappler in the encounter.

Finally, there were only three men left to decide the outcome of this internationally renowned battle. People expected to see Ernie Ladd and Porkchop Cash coming down to the final wire. The shock was newcomer Java Ruuk's presence. It appeared Ruuk had come to the end of his stay when Porkchop pounded him to the mat. However, Porkchop was so interested in Ruuk he forgot about Ladd. That is a mistake no one should make.

Ladd leaped high in the air. His foot came crashing down on Cash's back. Porkchop's body convulsed as if it had

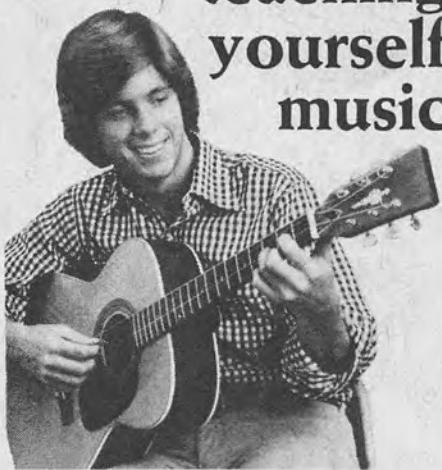
been shot. Ladd then went after the injured Cash as Ruuk lay seemingly stunned upon the mat.

However, Ernie was too confident as he tried to finish Cash off. Porkchop used every ounce of reserved strength he had to reverse Ladd's attack and sent the huge grappler falling over the ropes. As Ladd crashed to the floor, the arena erupted in cheers. The noise made it impossible

for Porkchop to hear Ruuk, who had only been playing possum, charging at him. Java smashed Porkchop flush in the back. The victim never had a chance to see what hit him before he sailed over the ropes. Incredible but true, Java Ruuk was the 1976 Los Angeles battle royal champion!

Java Ruuk was \$20,000 richer. As for the other 21 men, they were already thinking about next year. □

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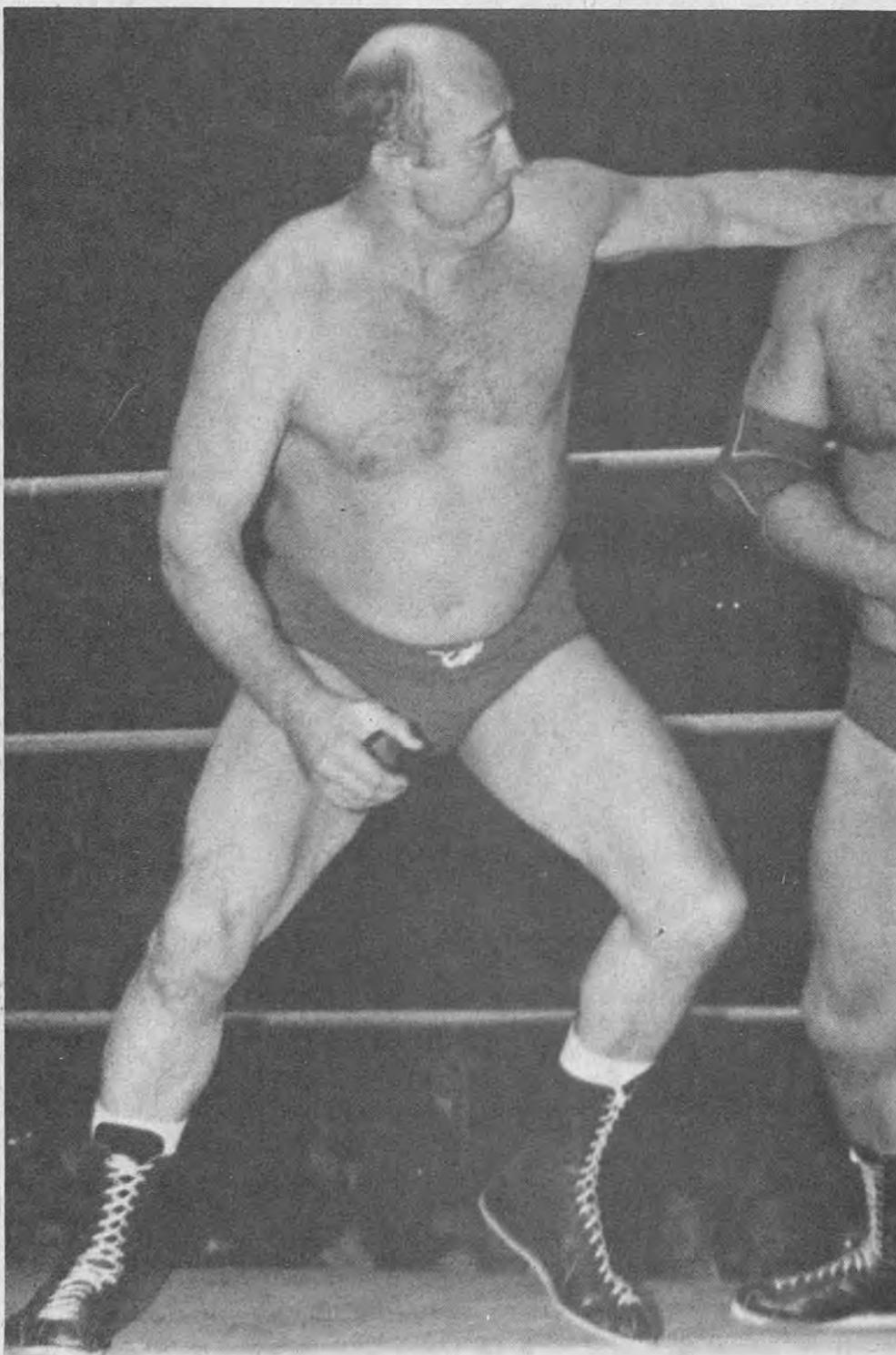
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VERNE GAGNE

(Continued from Page 18)



The return match in progress, Gagne shoves Bockwinkle away when Nick prepared to punch him. Bockwinkle kept the belt.

me to recover the title—a lot harder than I had supposed. But I don't plan to retire until I do. I can't retire until I do."

There was nothing left to say. Verne

Gagne had answered the most difficult question of his life fairly and honestly, and to the best of his ability. Verne left slowly, a man clouded by the suspicion his glory was behind him.

Is there a chance Verne Gagne can regain his title? Most experts are afraid to predict. Bockwinkle looks more unbeatable after every defense, especially with the help of interfering Heenan. Gagne, and every other man hoping to become AWA champion, has his work



cut out for him.

Yet Gagne has been splendid so many times in the past. It would be wrong to assume he can never equal those heights again. He is the consummate wrestler, able to execute with exquisite perfection. His years of mat combat have honed his cunning to be the best in the sport.

Verne Gagne will try his hardest to regain the AWA title. No man can do more. But will it be enough? □

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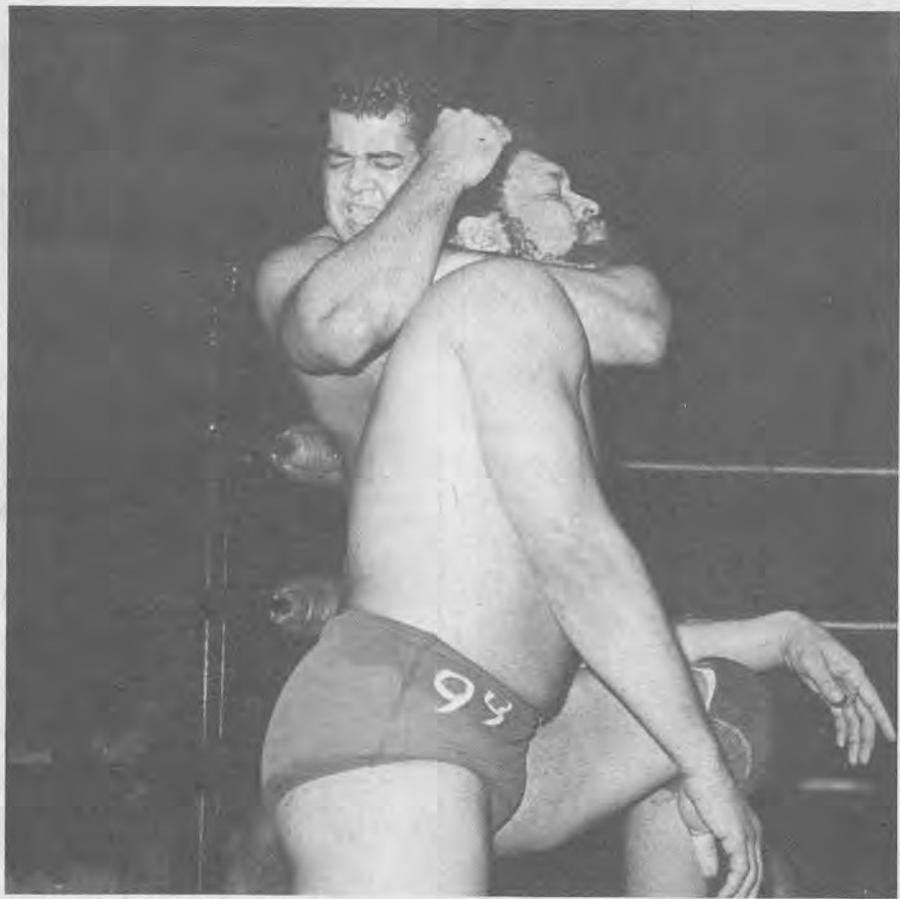
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SINCERELY YOURS

(Continued from Page 12)



Pedro Morales has had his hands full with the tactics of Ernie Ladd. But the fiery Puerto Rican star proves he can dish it out just as well (above). Pedro is still looking for that clean cut victory over Ladd to prove to his fans he's better than Ernie.

and many others. Thanks for a permanent reminder of a show I'll always remember.

BEN WESTBURY
Grand Rapids, Mich.

ONE FOR MORALES

I've just finished "Pedro's Crucial Task: Defeat Ladd—Or Retire!" (INSIDE WRESTLING/March 1976). Now I have to write this letter.

I'm begging Pedro Morales not to retire, even though he didn't win a clear-cut victory over Ernie Ladd. I've worshipped Pedro for years and I would hate to see him retire.

Keep wrestling, Pedro! Your fans love you!

CONSUELA DOMIANIS
New York, New York

NICE JOB

Not long ago, I saw the *Six Million Dollar Man* episode, "Bigfoot." I saw in *TV Guide* Bigfoot was portrayed by Andre the Giant.

I couldn't believe it. Andre looked so different. I hope to see more wrestlers on television shows and in movies.

Congratulations, Andre, on an excellent job.

FRANCIS CERVASIO
Tresckow, Pa.

EDITOR'S NOTE: We have an exclusive feature on Andre's performance on the *Six Million Dollar Man* in this issue. Turn to page 34.

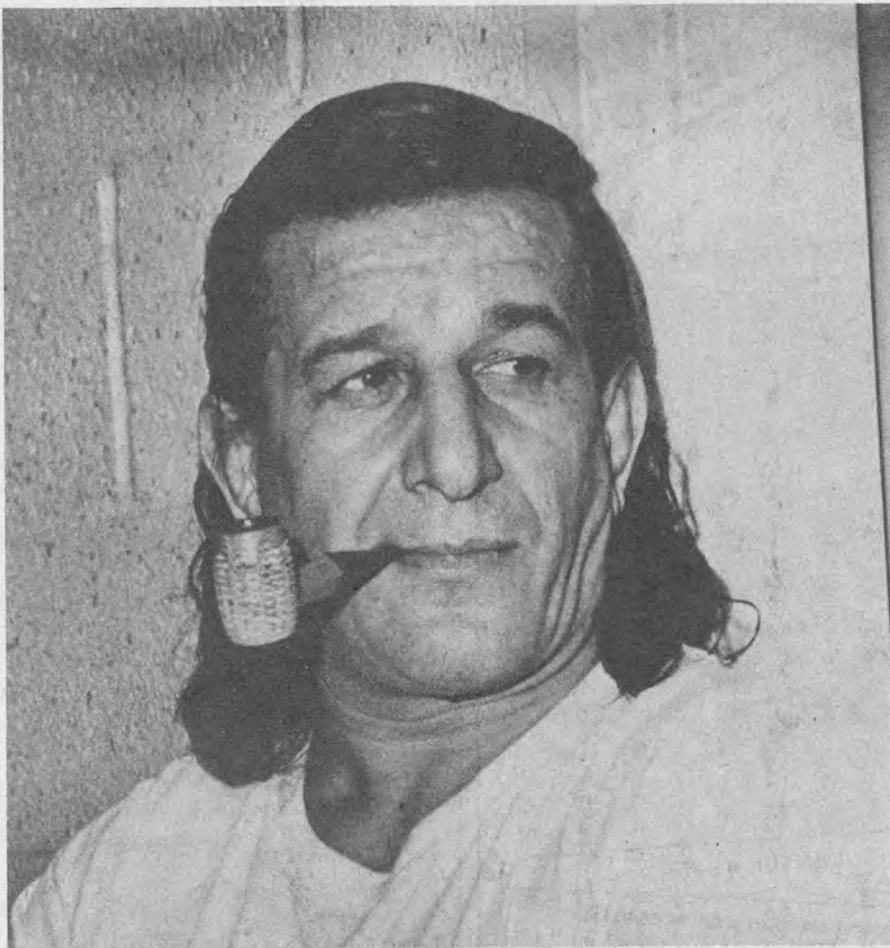
POLISH POWER

Is Bruno Sammartino afraid of Ivan Putski?

It seems to me Ivan deserves a shot at the title. Ivan is the real champ. Ivan has beaten the top wrestlers of his day.

If Bruno has the guts to challenge Ivan, they better have a stretcher ready to carry out ex-champ Bruno Sammartino.

K. SINGER
North Woodmere, N.Y.



Chief Jay Strongbow may be happy at home, but fans in the WWWF areas want him to return now!

STRONGBOW, COME HOME

I am writing in reply to the article, "Revealed for the First Time—Why Chief Jay Strongbow Left the WWWF" (INSIDE WRESTLING/February 1976).

In this article, Chief Jay says not getting a title shot wasn't a major factor in his decision to leave the WWWF. I think he lied when he said this. Not getting a title shot was probably the real reason he left!

Strongbow said his main consideration in leaving was his desire to be with his family. If this is the case, then why did Chief ever come here to begin with, much less stay here for that length of time.

I think the Chief is a great wrestler and should get a match with Bruno Sammartino. A match similar to this occurred once before when Bruno wrestled Pedro Morales in Shea stadium. This match would bring the Chief back home and give the fans a real treat.

ALAN GLASSMAN
Bayside, N.Y. □

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WRESTLING CAPITALS

(Continued from Page 10)



Angelo Mosca (above) and Wahoo McDaniel (below) engaged in a war so savagely wild it took a corps of wrestlers five whole minutes to tear the two apart!



to the canvas. Mosca tried to climb in first, but Wahoo wouldn't let him. He kept pulling Mosca back to the concrete, delivering powerful blows to Angelo's head.

Finally both men were back inside the ropes, but the fury of the match continued there. The two men battled so brutally, other wrestlers present in the arena had to be called in to stop the action. Only after a five minute effort did they have any success.

In other action, the tag team of Tiger Conway Jr. and Steve Keirn battled against Spoilers I and II in a furious competition. The Spoilers were finally upset when Conway laid out Spoiler I with a flying headbutt off the top rope.



Mr. Fugi shrugs his shoulders during an argument with his tag team partner, Professor Tanaka. Fugi recently won the San Francisco battle royal.

CALIFORNIA NEWS By Ron Valin

The San Francisco Cow Palace held its annual 18-man battle royal recently, with the best assemblage of talent people in the Bay City had ever seen.

Among the participants in this fast, furious, action-packed match were Ray Stevens, Pat Patterson, Andre the Giant, Earl Maynard, Pedro Morales, Dory Funk Jr., Harley Race, Java Ruuk, Bobby Jaggers, and the Masked Invaders. Also in the battle royal were Moondog Mayne, Karl Von Braunner, Don Muraco and Mr. Fuji.

Most of the participants were eliminated in the early action of the match. By the time 30 minutes had passed, only Stevens, Muraco, and Mr. Fuji remained. Ray dropkicked Muraco over the top rope and then split open Mr. Fuji's head. When it appeared to the crowd Stevens was about to win his third San Francisco battle royal, Fugi threw salt at Ray. Then he flipped Stevens over the top rope to win a huge trophy and \$15,000.

In other matches that night, Dory Funk Jr. had a vicious battle with the ruthless Java Ruuk. He was finally able to emerge victorious when Ruuk was disqualified. Andre the Giant teamed with Peter Maivia to win an exciting victory over The Invaders... Pat Patterson and Ray Stevens defeated Don Muraco and his partner for the night, Mr. Saito.

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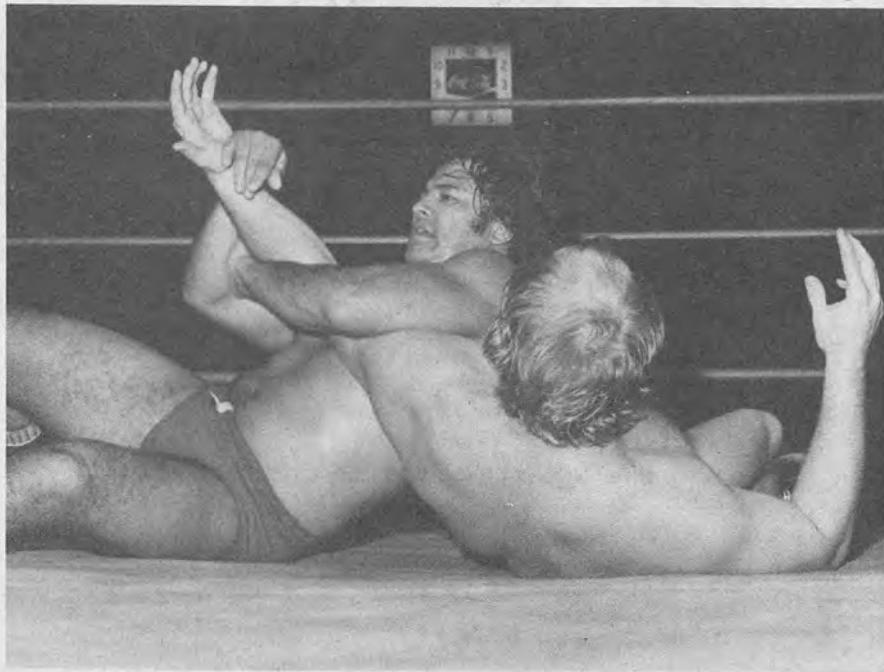
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Age

CHAVO

(Continued from Page 21)



A punishing armlock sees young Chavo inflict pain on the former NWA king (above). In a test of strength it's Dory taking command (below). Note the worried look on Dory's face. It looks like he's aware that Chavo has become much more than he ever bargained for. Chavo is about to apply an excruciating headlock (right) that'll keep Dory on the mat for a while. Now Chavo wants NWA king Terry!



Terry's defeat has not made him or his brother very happy.

Soon after he won the belt, Terry wanted to exact revenge for his loss. However, he discovered he would not be able to have a match scheduled against Chavo, since he had to assume Brisco's schedule. Therefore, Dory Jr. gladly substituted for his brother.

At first, Dory believed he would have little trouble defeating the million dollar rookie. He readily agreed to any terms Chavo asked, including the right to have the match in Los Angeles. But Dory soon learned to regret his lack of caution.

When contracts were signed for the match between Funk and Chavo, Dory knew very little about his opponent. He was soon enlightened. He learned Guerrero was a strictly scientific wrestler who would tolerate no less from an opponent. Dory discovered Chavo possessed vast skills and great abilities, along with a legion of loyal fans. He learned Los Angeles fans would expect Chavo to wrestle brilliantly against any opponent. Guerrero's reputation was preceding him.

But Dory wasn't worried. "Why should I be concerned by what other people say? I will have to judge this guy's abilities when I wrestle him. I am not going to run scared because of some hype the promoters put out. Words alone can't defeat me."

"Only one thing bothers me—Guerrero's hometown advantage. I



himself worthy of their trust. So far, he has succeeded.

Since his professional debut, Chavo has been undefeated, though he has battled many excellent oppo-

nents. Among those men he has defeated is Terry Funk. Guerrero and Funk battled in Los Angeles a month before Terry won his belt from Jack Brisco.

have a strong feeling the referee will be favoring Chavo over me.

"However, I don't doubt I can overcome this disadvantage. I don't doubt I will emerge victorious from this match. I don't doubt I will be able to avenge Terry's loss to this guy. I don't doubt Chavo Guerrero will be sorry he ever agreed to wrestle me!"

When the time for their match came, it was Chavo who was slightly unnerved. "This is a different kind of experience for me—wrestling a man who was once champion. I've also never battled a man who seemed so intent upon exacting revenge. I just can't predict how tonight will turn out."

As Chavo entered the arena, a tremendous cheer rose from the spectators. It took five minutes for the ovation to die down. Then Dory Jr. entered. There was some polite cheers and applause, but no boozing. Though Funk was battling against their hero, the fans still respected the former NWA champion.

The match was a tough though scientific wrestling battle, with each grappler reversing the other's holds. Just as Chavo would have Dory in a tight headlock, Funk would slip out and put an armlock on Guerrero. It soon became a battle of endurance—which wrestler would be able to go for the full 30 minutes.

At 25 minutes into the match, the two engaged in a furious battle of takedowns. When the dust cleared it was Chavo locking Dory in a cradle hold. In a matter of seconds, the referee awarded the match to the Americas Champion.

"It was too fast a count!" screamed Dory as Guerrero's hand was being raised in victory. "He didn't win. It isn't fair!" But no one was listening to Dory's claim.

Later in his dressing room, Funk commented on the decision: "I knew I couldn't have a fair match in Los Angeles. There isn't any doubt in my mind that was a fast count. I was just about to get up when I suddenly heard the referee begin to count. I know three seconds can't pass that quickly. It was only because Chavo is the hometown grappler the referee counted so fast. It's the same thing that happened to Terry!"

In his dressing room Chavo was relaxing. "It was a tough match, but I won it fair and square. And, to my mind, there is no way Dory Funk can dispute this. The victory is mine!" □

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JACK BRISCO

(Continued from Page 24)



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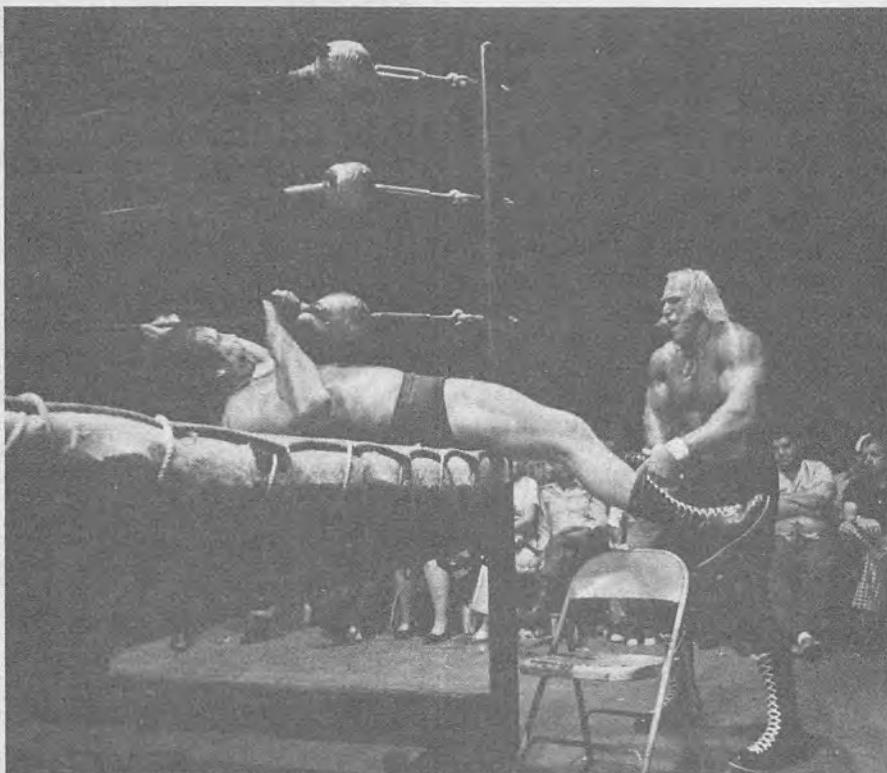
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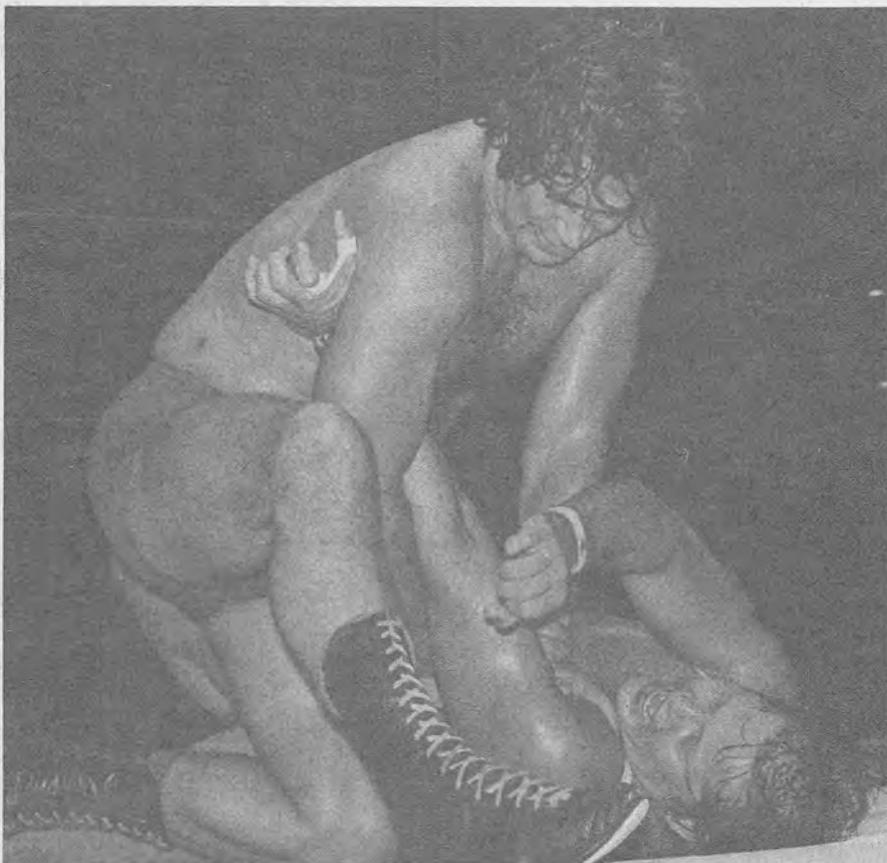
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Few people know it, but Jack defended his title against Superstar Billy Graham (above) in January 1975. Graham lost via disqualification. Brisco locks up Bob Roop (below). The two, once very close friends now despise each other since Roop's change of heart. Roop has become a feared rulebreaker—something Jack loathes.





This exclusive photo was taken on the night Terry Funk upset Jack for the NWA Championship

bundle of nerves. Whoever said it's lonely at the top sure knew what he was talking about. Everyone is an enemy when you get down to the bottom line. And every match is so important. Every time you step into an arena the title is on the line. There's no release from the pressure.

"It's great, but it's exhausting. I'll look back on my reign as the most exciting part of my life, but also the toughest."

We noticed Jack talked as if he expected to get the title back. If it was such an ordeal, why should he want to become champion again so quickly?

"I really wouldn't go after the title again," Jack says, "if I had lost it to someone other than Terry Funk. The Funks have become the bitterest enemies of my brother Jerry and myself. I just couldn't give up with Terry's victory over me like a knife at my heart. I have to take the title away from him. Sooner or later, I will."

"It's strange, though. I'm having a good time not being champion. It's a relief I enjoy. But I've got to get the title back with all its worries and all its tensions. Life can be strange."

"But I'll cross that bridge when I come to it. As of now, I'm enjoying the calm of being an ex-champion. I can go back to wrestling for the fun of it."

Jack Brisco is no longer champion. Strangely, he had to lose his title to feel on top of the world!

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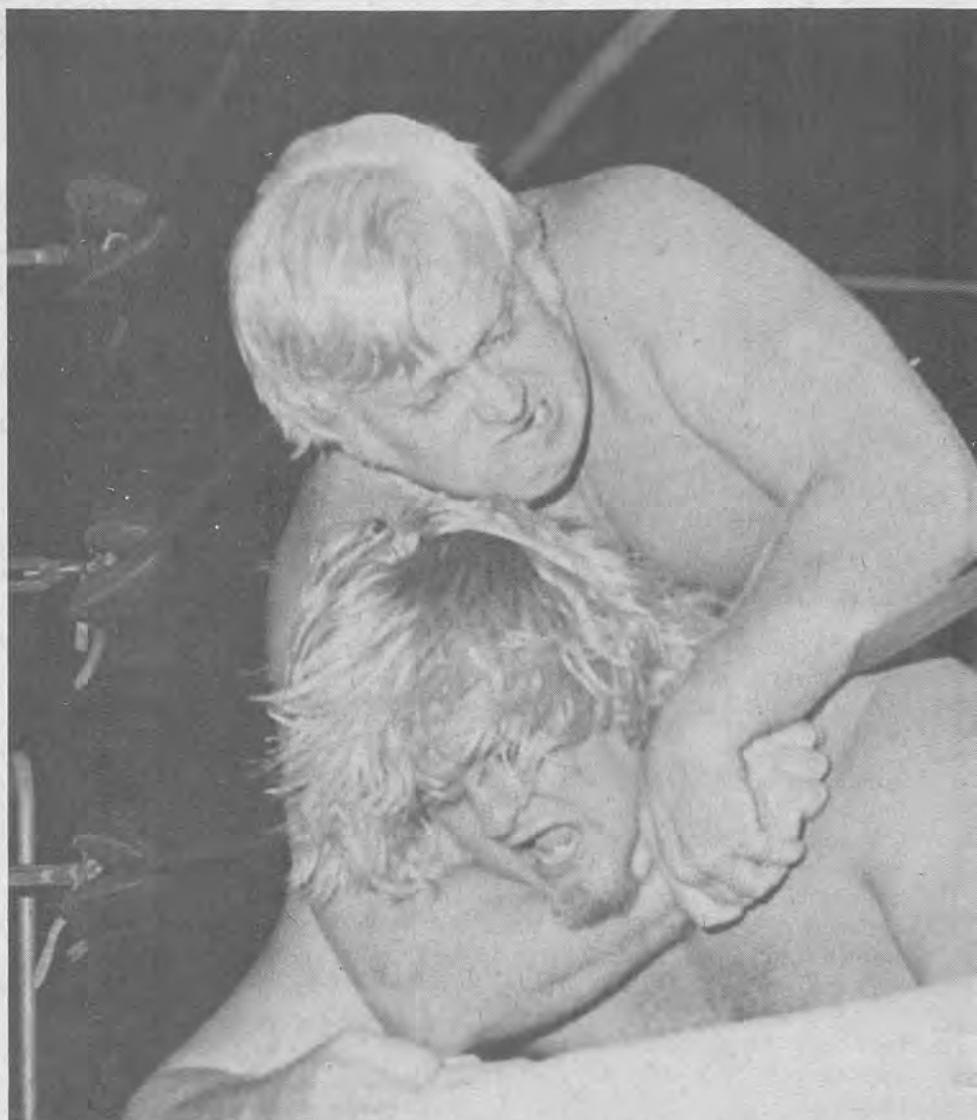
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DISH IT OUT

(Continued from Page 29)



Hawk strangles Bobby (above) and floors him with a fist (below). Few have ever seen Bobby take such a beating.



against Hawk's dirty tactics, Bobby did manage to mix it up with him in a contest of brutal tactics. Finally the referee had to step in and halt the melee when neither grappler would back off when the official ordered them to break and wrestle clean.

Hawk admitted he was surprised at Bobby.

"You're damn straight I was surprised!" exclaimed the raspy voiced Hawk. "I know I'm good. As a matter of fact I'm probably the best roughhouse wrestler in the business. But I also know Bobby Duncum is great in that category. I've seen him kick the hell out of guys who were a lot more well known than he was. That is how he earned his reputation—beating men with big reputations."

"I waited for him to go nuts and try to tear me apart," Rip went on. "But it never happened. I mean



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once or twice he did gouge my eyes or kick me, but he wasn't rough. It's as though he was trying to wrestle by the rules. Maybe that's it. The fans were cheering him. They wanted to see him beat me. Maybe he was trying to please them."

This could be the case, but Bobby doesn't agree.

"No way," he stressed. "I don't try to please anyone but myself when I'm rasslin'. I say this again: The problem will be cleared soon. I'm wrestling too many softies like Sammartino, Gagne, Billy Robinson and their sort. I was gettin' to be like them. Well, it ain't gonna happen. I will wrestle more guys with my style and I will show them I am king of the roughhouse wrestlers!"

Bobby Duncum doesn't need to prove that to anyone—except himself! □

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ANDRE THE GIANT

(Continued from Page 35)



The huge awesome sight of the legendary monster "Bigfoot" is played perfectly by Andre the Giant. Episode two of this "Six Million Dollar Man" episode hit the number one spot in TV's Nielsen Ratings. Andre is proud of the job he did on the program.

my feelings when I came to this realization, except to say I was a bit shocked."

The makeup so impressing Mr. Bergman was especially designed for Andre's large features. First a cast was made of Andre's face so a mold could be poured to change the basic contours of the giant's countenance. Then extra latex molding was applied to the cheek structures. Greasepaint was then applied to this, changing the coloring of Andre's face. To finish the job, crepe hair, a special kind of false hair used to

change an image, was added.

In all the makeup job took three hours to apply. And this had to be done every morning for all 10 days of shooting!

Andre landed the part in the show due to his vast abilities and his huge popularity. The producers felt only a man of Andre's stature could adequately fill the role. Additionally, they felt the grappler could attract millions of viewers to watch the two episodes.

"The Six Million Dollar Man"



This photo, taken direct from a TV set, shows "Bigfoot" taking Steve Austin back to his captors after he escaped them.

episodes were Andre's first venture into the acting world of television. However, if things work out right, Andre may soon guest star in several other television shows. And if all those spots work out well, the giant grappler may well be on the way to having a TV series of his own!

"As long as I don't portray a monster, I'd love to do my own show," says Andre. "As everyone knows, I'm just the opposite of that creature I played on 'The Six Million Dollar Man' show."

Everyone who knows Andre will attest to that fact. The character of Bigfoot was vicious, not caring what, or who he destroyed.

"It was a lot of fun doing the show," added Andre. "I had to do my own stunts. After all, how were they going to find a stand-in who is seven foot-five inches and weighs over four hundred pounds?

"It got a little rough for me at times. There was this one scene where Steve Austin gets the upper hand and sends me rolling down this huge wooded hill. I rolled and rolled until I finally came to the bottom and almost crashed into the lighting equipment on the set.

"Because of some technical problems, we had to do that scene five times," huge Andre recalls. "By the third time I was ready to murder the guy who kept yelling 'We'll have to do that scene again.'

The actors on the set—Lee Majors, Stephanie Powers, and others all agree it was a real pleasure to work with Andre.

"We hope to have more parts for Andre," a casting director for television shows said. "He has appeal and I think he could become a star." □

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FRED BLASSIE

(Continued from Page 27)



Blassie lead Waldo Von Erich (above) to a shot at Sammartino's belt. The Wolfman was a man even Blassie had trouble restraining (below left). He even attacked reporters and fans! Huge Crusher Blackwell (below right) has improved immensely since Blassie found him.



manager's greatness he refuses to talk about. No matter how much he brags, he will never admit to interfering in his wrestler's matches. If truth be known, this is what makes them so much more dangerous than other opponents.

It would take a textbook to analyze the many ways Blassie sneaks in and batters his wrestlers' foes. No referee can seem to catch him. Even the wrestlers themselves are unsure how he does it. All they know, as the doctor works over their broken bodies, is Freddie was mercilessly effective.

It is known Blassie has long, secret training sessions where his wrestlers practice maneuvering opponents near their manager. It takes less than a second for Freddie to weaken a properly maneuvered

opponent. When he does it for longer periods, it is because blood-lust has conquered reason.

Blassie's unscrupulous cunning, coupled with great power, makes him a dangerous man to be around. There is no such thing as a fair match when he is in the arena. But the strange thing is Blassie's wrestling genius could easily make his interference unnecessary; all he needs to do is instruct his grapplers in the proper strategy.

The truth is Freddie Blassie wants to interfere, wants to feel a man buckle under his punishment. He doesn't have to do what he does, but he loves it too much to stop. This is what makes Freddie Blassie, manager, one of the most dangerous men on the face of the earth! □

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ERNIE LADD

(Continued from Page 39)



Ernie Ladd, number 77 and two slashes of lightning on his helmet, prepares to capture Buffalo Bills' quarterback Daryle Lamonica (above). Quarterbacks and running backs throughout professional football breathed a sigh of relief when Ernie hung up his football cleats and became the self-proclaimed king of wrestling (below).



3-3. I will kill an opponent with a sledge hammer. It doesn't matter to me who I straighten out."

There is one honor Ernie has never achieved; he has never won a world title, though he has had numerous championship shots. But Ernie does not seem bothered by this fact: "I don't make excuses," Ladd explains. "The title doesn't mean that much to me. I make more money than a lot of guys who possess titles. Some guys don't feel secure unless they have a title. I couldn't be on the road every night like a titleholder. I like to spend my time with my family."

As proud as he is of his athletic achievements, Ernie Ladd is even prouder of his family. He speaks lovingly of his wife Roslyn. "She's a very tall woman—she's five feet, two inches tall! I'm 6-9. She's a devoted mother. She's a devoted wife. I respect her highly. We have one of the most beautiful relationships a man and wife can have. I'm proud of her."

"Roslyn and I have been blessed. We have four of the finest children in the land. Their names are Ernie Lawrence Ladd, Rodney James Ladd, Erica Ladd, and Reginald Lamont Ladd. They've never had the opportunity to see their father being the victim of fan hatred because they know who the best wrestler really is. They understand people sometimes get confused.

"I have a kid brother who is 16 years old and is six feet, six inches tall. I expect big things out of him in basketball in high school. I have him lifting weights now. I want him to be a good athlete.

"There is a good reason why I don't want him to go into football like I did. Most football players have problems with their legs when they get to be around 35. This is something I wouldn't want him to go through. I wear knee pads to protect my knees because they have been through a lot of battles, and I wouldn't want him to be the victim of the same kinds of things I've been through. After all, if I've been through something that could cause problems later in life, I want my brother or my kid to bypass it."

One injury Ladd has carried over into his wrestling career is a bad thumb. At least he says it is a bad thumb. He comes into the ring with quite a bit of bandage on that thumb. And it's funny how that thumb just happens to get to the throat of his opponent when the giant Ladd is in trouble.

"It's a chronic injury," Ladd says. "It comes and goes. It's not one of those things that, once it's healed, is cured forever. You are talking about a hairline fracture. It can be reinjured at any time.

'I never use that thumb on an opponent. Man that'd hurt me too much. You must be talking about someone else. I'd never do anything like hurting my opponent with a taped thumb.'

You won't find too many people to believe Ladd's last statement. And yet some will. That's what makes this man so controversial.

How much longer will Ernie Ladd go on wrestling?

"When I cease being among the top moneymakers in wrestling, I will find something else to do," he says. And we predict that's a long way off. Ernie Ladd, the "Self Proclaimed King" plans to rule for a long, long time. □

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BLOODBATH

(Continued from Page 41)



Hickerson is about to whip Fargo across the ring (above) as both continue to lose blood. Phil takes the pipe from Condry and beats Fargo on the back and arm (below) while Dennis slugs Jackie. Fans in Tennessee claim this is the bloodiest battle they've ever seen! And they'll be seeing more like this as the feud between Hickerson and Fargo isn't nearly over. It could go on until one is crippled.



The doctor then entered and Fargo stopped talking for a moment. Even if Condry had been in another country, Fargo would have needed a doctor. One is always necessary after a brass knuckles match.

Fargo's opponent in this brass knuckles match had been Phil Hickerson. The two men had hated each other for many years. Therefore, this battle would allow all the hatred to explode. The victor would walk away with a feeling of revenge. The loser would be lucky to walk away!

From the opening bell, the two men pounded away at each other with reckless abandon. Their leaden fists crashed against exposed bone and flesh. Within a few seconds, blood was gushing from wounds on the faces of both men. Even the most bloodthirsty spectator was sickened by the scarlet spectacle!

The two men were relentless in their assault upon each other. Neither would allow the other to have an upper hand for more than a few fleeting moments. New wounds would open as soon as old ones

temporarily healed over. Though both men were primed for this match—they were in the best possible condition—neither man would be able to withstand the brutal punishment for a sustained amount of time.

As the bloodbath wore on, Hickerson grew weaker. His punches began to lack the power they had previously had. He could not control his blows. His defense was quickly crumbling. Still, he tried valiantly to continue, hoping for a desperation punch to end Fargo forever.

As every spectator in the arena knew, that punch would never come. Hickerson was too weak. He had taken too many punches. Despite the punches reducing Fargo's face to a bloody pulp, Hickerson had not been able to land the one punch which would put Jackie to the canvas. But Condry, who hates Fargo almost as much as Hickerson hates Fargo, refused to allow Jackie to finish as the victor in this brutal match.

Grabbing a heavy lead pipe from underneath the ring, Dennis came storming into the battle, the weapon flashing through the air. It crashed against Fargo's arm and sent him flying. Jackie crashed into the ropes and Condry waded in for the kill.

Fargo must have sustained at least a dozen blows on his arm before Condry was pulled off him and Hickerson was disqualified. By the time the assault was finished, Fargo's arm hung limply by his side. Jackie could not move a single muscle in it.

When the doctor examined Fargo's arm, he shook his head in wonder and said, "It is a damn good thing you work out so much. The muscles in the arms are in excellent condition. If they were not so well conditioned, the left arm would have been useless. However, with special care, you should be able to wrestle again within a month's time."

Fargo listened patiently to the doctor's words. It relieved him to hear he would not lose use of his arm permanently. Yet the words sparked a fire deep within Jackie's soul.

"When I am able to wrestle again," Fargo declared with total calm, "Dennis Condry will be the one with the injury. But I will not be kind. I will leave him with a permanent injury. He deserves no less!"

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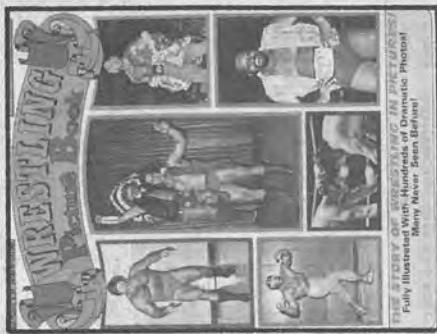
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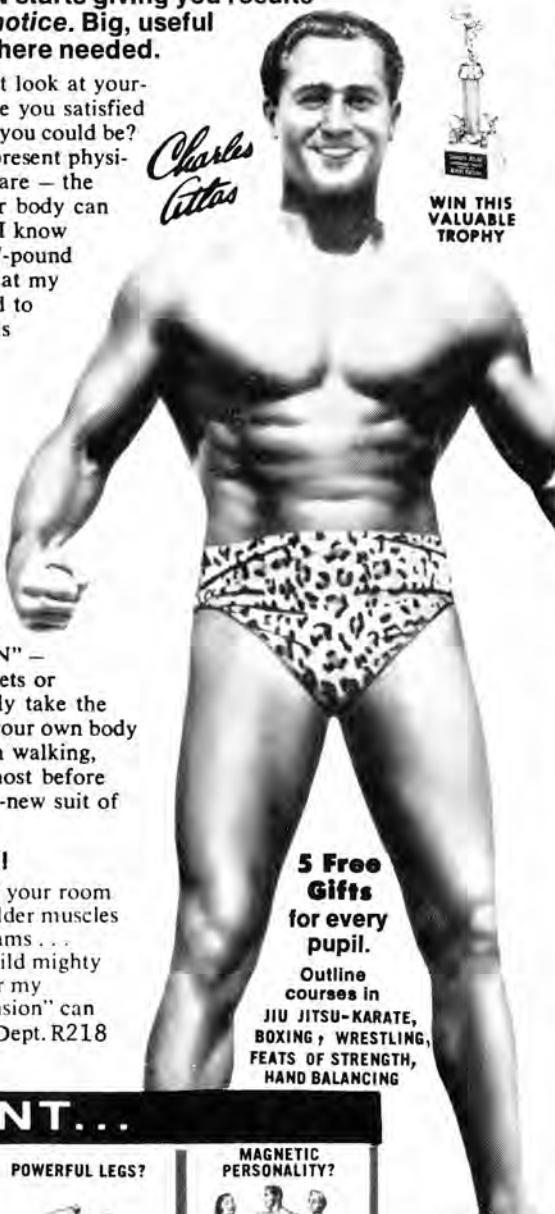
Lose "pot belly." Take a good honest look at yourself! Are you proud of your body — or are you satisfied to go through life being just "half the man" you could be? No matter how ashamed you are of your present physical condition — or how old or young you are — the "sleeping" muscles already present in your body can turn you into a REAL man! Believe me, I know — because I was once a skinny, scrawny 97-pound half-alive weakling! People used to laugh at my build and make fun of me. I was ashamed to strip for sports or the beach . . . shy of girls . . . afraid of healthy competition.

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